LC Rev. Book

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS And SALVATION Rescued from *Vulgar Errours.*

BY

JOSEPH GLANVIL

Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

LONDON,
Printed for *James Collins*, in the *Temple*-passage from *Essex*-*Street*, 1677.

Iohn. 14. 6.
Jesus saith vnto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the Life, &c.

2 C her. Book

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June 8th. 1761

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Sam. Parker.

April 9th 1670.

To the Right Honourable

Charles Lord *Herbert*,

Eldeſt Son to the moſt Honorable

HENRY

Lord Marquis of

WORCESTER.

My Lord,

ALthough I have not had the Happineſs to ſee your Lordſhip ſince your very tender years, by reaſon of your diſtance in Foreign parts; yet I have heard ſo much of your great Improvements in Knowledge

and Vertue, that I cannot ſlip this occaſion to congratulate your early Fame, and the hopes, or rather Aſſurance you give of being an extraordinary Perſon. For that ſeaſon of Life which ſo many others paſs away in Frolicks, and Riot, and vain Amours; In Raillery, and the wanton Eſſays of Buffooning & Verſifying Wit, (which contemptible childiſhneſs the youth of the preſent age ſeems to value as the higheſt Perfection) your Lordſhip wiſely, and worthi'y imploys in gaining

thoſe

thoſe real Acompliſhments, which may fit you for Publick Service, in that high Station in which Providence hath ſet you.

My Lord, you are deſcended from an Ancient Stock of moſt Noble Progenitors, and are the immediate Son of a Lord and Lady, whoſe Vertues may inſpire all who have the Honour and Happineſs to be related to them, with the Nobleſt Thoughts and Endeavours; and doubtleſs a generous Ambition prompts your Lordſhip to

appear worthy the Glorie of ſuch Anceſtors. Nobility is the mark of the favour of Princes, and when 'tis adorn'd with intellectual and moral Excellencies, it hath then the Signatures of God upon it, and the *Perſonal* gives Luſtre to the *Hereditary* Greatneſs. Secular Honours extort outward ſhews of Reſpect and Homage; while the unſuitable Diſpoſitions of ſuch as are painted with miſplaced Titles, make them Objects of the real ſcorn of their pretended Adorers; But the Nobleneſs

's of a wise and Vertuous Spirit commands inward Venerations, and hath a large Empire over the Souls of Men. Knowledge is a Beam of the Cœlestial Light, and Vertue a Branch of the Divine Image; Great Excellencies in themselves, and true Accomplishments of humane Nature: In both your Lordship hath outdone your few years, and given a Pattern to young Noblemen, how to imploy their Youth Honourably and Becommingly, to the Reputation of their Quality, and

Families; and their own Happineſs and Glory.

But, my Lord, there is a Perfection beyond theſe, or more properly, 'tis the height and perfection of them, and that is Religion: this makes Honourable in both Worlds; and enters thoſe that are truly poſſeſt of it, among the Nobility of God. I doubt not but your Lordſhip hath taken care to ſeaſon your Active and Conſiderate Youth with the Study and Practice of this beſt Accompliſhment: ſuch a Dedication of the

firſt Fruits to our Maker is moſt juſt in it ſelf, moſt acceptable to Him, and will be moſt comfortable to the Perſon that makes the Offering. Your Lordſhip is by the Bounty of Providence incircled with all Circumſtances of Earthly Felicity; Piety and a Religious Life will procure the Divine favour, bleſs all your Injoyments in this World, and aſſure infinitely better in another. *There* dwells our Happineſs, and Religion is the way to it. This is the Subject of the little

Book

Book with which I here humbly preſent your Lordſhip. If it may contribute any thing to your Service, in theſe higheſt Concerns, it will be a mighty Pleaſure, and Satisfaction to,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhips

Moſt humble and moſt

obedient Servant,

Joſ. Glanvil.

The

The Preface.

THis Diſcourſe was firſt printed about ſix years ago; ſince which time it had the fortune of a ſtoln Edition in Scotland. *The occaſion of its Publication was this, I being deſired to preach at a neighbour-City, recollected the laſt Sermon I had delivered to mine own people, and made uſe of that: ſome of the Hearers, that thought themſelves fit Judges, miſapprehended my meaning in divers things, and paſt Sentence upon their own miſtakes as mine: this induced me to tranſcribe it out of my memory; which I did while it was yet freſh in my mind, exactly as to the matter, though poſſibly with ſome ſmall difference as to the frame of words, and with ſome additions at the end: The Copy was accidentally ſeen by a near Relation, who deſired it ſhould be publiſh'd, which I permitted; and do it now again at my Bookſeller's Inſtance.*

Luke

Luke 12. 24.

Strive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate: For many, I ſay unto you, ſhall ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.

THE

The Way OF HAPPINESS AND SALVATION.

WHEN I consider the *goodness* of God; and the *merits* of his Son, our Saviour; and the *Influences* of the Holy Spirit; and all the *advantages* of the Gospel; The *certainty* of its Principles, the *reasonableness* of its duties, the *greatness* of its ends, the *suitableness* of its means, the *glory* of its Rewards,

and the *Terrour of its punishments*; I ſay, when I conſider *theſe*, and then look upon *Man* as a *reaſonable* Creature, apprehenſive of *Duty*, and *intereſt*, and apt to be moved by *hopes* and *fears*; I cannot but wonder, and be aſtoniſht to think, that notwithſtanding *all this*, the far greater part of men ſhould finally miſcarry, and be undone. 'Tis poſſible *ſome* ſuch *Conſiderations* might be the occaſion of the *Queſtion* propounded to our Saviour in the verſe immediately foregoing the Text. ---*Lord, are there Few that be ſaved? God* is *Love*, and all the Creatures are *His*, and man a noble ſort: *He* is the *Lover* of *Men*, and *Thou* art *Redeemer* of Men; and though *Man* hath *offended*, yet God is propenſe to *pardon*, and in *Thee* he is reconciled; He is deſirous of our happineſs, and Thou art come into the world to offer, and promote it; and the *Holy Ghoſt* is *powerful* and *ready* to aſſiſt our endeavours; We were made for happineſs, and we ſeek it; And ---

Lord,

Lord, are there Few that be ſaved? The Text is Chriſt's return to the Queſtion, *Strive to enter in at the ſtraight Gate; for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.* In which words we have three things.

(I) An Anſwer imply'd; *ſtraight is the Gate.*

(II) A duty expreſt, *ſtrive to enter.*

(III) A Conſideration to engage our greater care and deligence in the Duty; *For many will ſeek to enter, and ſhall not be able.*

By the *Gate*, we may underſtand the entrance, and all the way of Happineſs, and that is, *Religion*; By the *ſtraightneſs* of it; the *Difficulties* we are to encounter. By *ſtriving*; earneſt and ſincere *endeavour*: By *ſeeking*; an *imperfect ſtriving*. And from the words thus briefly explain'd, Theſe Propoſitions offer themſelves to our Conſideration.

I. There are many and great difficulties in Religion, *The Gate is straight.*

II. The difficulties may be overcome by striving, *Strive to enter.*

III. There is a sort of striving that will not procure an entrance, *For many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.*

I begin with the First in order, *viz. That there are many and great difficulties in Religion*; And to what I have to say about it, I premise this negative Consideration. That,

The *Difficulties* of *Religion* do not lye in the *Understanding*. *Religion* is a *plain* thing, and *easie* to be *understood*. 'Tis no *deep* subtilty, or *high-strain'd* notion; 'tis no *gilded* phancy, or *elaborate* exercise of the brain; 'Tis not plac'd in the *clouds* of Imagination nor wrapt up in *mystical* cloathing. But 'tis *obvious* and *familiar*, *easie* and *intelligible*; First preach't by *Fishermen* and *Mechanicks*, without pomp of speech, or height of speculation addre

addreſt to *Babes* and *Plebeian* heads; and intended to govern the *wills* of the *honeſt*, and *ſincere*; and not to exerciſe the *wits* of the *notional*, and *curious*. So that we need not mount the *wings* of the *wind* to fetch *Religion* from the *ſtars*; nor go down to the *deep* to fetch it *up* from thence; For 'tis *with us*, and *before us*, as *open* as the *day*, and as *familiar* as the *light*. The *great Præcepts* of the Goſpel are cloathed in Sun-beams, and are as viſible to the *common* eye, as to the *Eagle* upon the higheſt perch. 'Tis no piece of *wit* or *ſubtilty* to be a *Chriſtian*, nor will it require much ſtudy, or learned retirement to *underſtand* the Religion we muſt practiſe. That which was to be *known* of *God*, was *manifeſt* to the very Heathen, *Rom.* 1. 19. *The Law is light*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 6. 13. And 'tis not only a ſingle paſſing glance on the eye; but 'tis *put into the heart*, and the promiſe is, that *we ſhall all know him, from the greateſt to the leaſt*. Our duty is ſet up

in open places, and ſhone upon by a clear Beam; 'Twas written of old upon the plain Tables of *Habakkuk*, *Hab.* 2. 2. So that the *running* Eye might *ſee and read:* And the *Religion* of the H. *Jeſus*, like *himſelf*, came into the world with *Rays* about its Head.

Religion, I ſay, is *clear*, and *plain*, and what is not *ſo*, may concern the *Theatre*, or the *Schools*; may entertain mens *Wits*, and ſerve the Intereſts of *Diſputes*; but 'tis nothing to *Religion*, 'tis nothing to the *Intereſt* of mens Souls.

Religion was once a *Myſtery*, but the Myſtery is *revealed*; And thoſe things that we yet count *Myſteries*, are *plainly* enough diſcover'd as to their *being ſuch* as we believe them, though we cannot underſtand the *manner how*; and 'tis no part of *Religion* to *enquire* into that, but rather *It* injoyns us meekly to acquieſce in the plain declarations of Faith without *bold* ſcrutiny into *hidden things*.

In

In short I say, the *difficulties of Religion are not in the Understanding*; *In prompto & Facili est æternitas*, said the Father; The affairs of eternity depend on things *Easy* and *Familiar*. And I premise this to prevent dangerous mistakes.

But thoug Religion be so facile and plain a thing to be understood, yet the *way* to *Heaven* is no *broad*, or *easie Path*; The *Gate is straight* enough for all that; and I now come to shew what are the *real difficulties* of *Religion*, and whence they arise.

I. One great Difficulty ariseth from the *depravity* of our *Natures*. The Scripture intimates, *That we are conceived in sin*, Psalm 55. 5. *Transgressours from the Womb*. Isaiah 48. 8. And *Children of Wrath*. Ephes. 2. 3. And we find by *Experience* that we bring *vile* Inclinations into the World with us. *Some* are *naturally* Cruel and Injurious; Proud and Imperious; Lustful and Revengful;

Others, Covetous and Unjuſt; Hy-
mourſome and Diſcontented; Trea-
cherous and Falſe: And there is
ſcarce an inſtance of *habitual* vice, or
villany, but ſome or other are addict-
ed to it by their *particular Make and*
Natures: I ſay, their *Natures*, for
certainly it is not true what ſome af-
firm, to ſerve their Opinions, in con-
tradiction to Experience; That *Vi-*
ces are not in Mens natural Propenſions
but inſtill'd by corrupt Education, evil
Cuſtoms and Examples: For we ſee
that thoſe whoſe *Education* hath been
the *ſame*, do yet *differ* extreamly
from each other in their *inclinations*.
And *ſome*, whoſe Breeding hath been
careleſs and *looſe*, who have ſeen
almoſt nothing elſe but Examples of
Vice; and been inſtructed in *little*
beſides the arts of *Vanity* and *Pleaſure*:
I ſay, there are *ſuch* who notwith-
ſtanding theſe their *unhappy* circum-
ſtances, diſcover none of thoſe *vile*
Inclinations, and Propenſions, that
are in *others*, whoſe *Education* hath
been

been very *strict* and *advantageous*. This I think is enough to shew that many of our evil habits are from *Nature*, and not from *Custom* only.

And yet I cannot say that *Humane Nature* is *so* debaucht, that *every Man* is inclin'd to *every Evil* by *it*: For there are *those*, who by their *Tempers* are *averse* to some kind of Vices, and *naturally* dispos'd to the *contrary Vertues*; *some* by their *Constitutions* are inclined to *hate Cruelty*, *Covetousness*, *Lying*, *Impudence* and *Injustice*, and are by *Temper*, *Merciful*, *Liberal*, *Modest*, *True* and *Just*. There are *kinds* of *Vices* which our Natures almost *universally* rise against, as many *Bestialities*, and some *horrid Cruelties*; and *all* men, except *Monsters* in Humane form, are dispos'd to *some* Vertues, such as *Love* to *Children*, and *Kindness* to *Friends* and *Benefactors*. All this I must confess and say, because *Experience* constrains me; and I do not know why *Systematick Notions* should

ſway more than *that.*

But notwithſtanding *theſe* laſt conceſſions, 'tis evident enough that our Natures are much *vitiated*, and *depraved*; and *this* makes our buſineſs in the way of Religion, *difficult.* For our work is, to *cleanſe* our *Natures*; and to *deſtroy* thoſe *Evil Inclinations*; to *crucifie the Old Man*; Rom. 6. 6. and to *purge out the old Leven*; 1 Cor. 5. 7. *This* is *Religion*, and the *Way* of Happineſs, which muſt needs be very *difficult*, and *uneaſie.* For the vices of *Inclination* are very *dear*, and *grateful* to us; They are our *Right Hands*, and our *Right Eyes*, and eſteemed as *our Selves:* So that to *cut* off, and *pluck* out *theſe*, and to bid defiance to, and wage War againſt our ſelves; to deſtroy the firſt born of our Natures, and to lop off our own Limbs; This cannot but be very *Irkſom* and *Diſpleaſant* Imployment, and this is one chief buſineſs; and a conſiderable thing that makes *Religion difficult.*

II. Another

II. Another *Difficulty* ariſeth from the *Influence* of the *Senſes*. We are Creatures of *ſenſe*, and ſenſible things do moſt powerfully move us, we are born *Children*, and live at firſt the *life* of *Beaſts*: That Age receives *deep* Impreſſions; and thoſe are made by the *ſenſes*, whoſe Intereſt grows *ſtrong*, and eſtabliſht in us before we come to the *uſe* of *Reaſon*; and after we have arrived to the exerciſe of *that*, ſenſible objects ſtill *poſſeſs* our *Affections*, and *ſway* our *Wills*, and *fill* our *Imaginations*, and *influence* our *Underſtandings*; ſo that we *love*, and *hate*; we *deſire* and *chooſe*, we *fancy*, and we *diſcourſe* according to thoſe *Impreſſions*; and hence it is that we are *enamour'd* of *Trifles*, and *fly* from our *Happineſs*; and *purſue Vexation*, and *embrace Miſery*; and *imagine Perverſely*, and *reaſon Childiſhly*: for the influence of the Body and its Senſes are the chief Fountains of *Sin*, and *Folly*, and *Temptation*:

tation: Upon which accounts it was that the *Platonical Philoſophers* declaim'd ſo *earneſtly* againſt the *Body*, and aſcrib'd all *Evils* and Michief to it; calling *vice* κακὰ ἕνλα, *corporeæ Peſtes*, *material Evils*, and *bodily Plagues*. And the Apoſtle that underſtood it better, calls *Sin* by the name of *Fleſh*, Gal. 5. 17. *Works of the Fleſh*, Gal. 5. 19. *Law of the Members*, Rom. 7. 23. and cries out upon the *Body of this Death*, Rom. 7. 24.

And now this is our *natural* Condition, a *ſtate* ſubject to the *prevalent* influences of *Senſe*, and by this means to *Sin* and *Temptation*; and 'tis our *Work* in Religion, to *mortifie* the *Body*, Rom. 8. 13. *and to ceaſe from making proviſion for the Fleſh*, Rom. 13. 14. *and from fulfilling the Luſts thereof*, Gal. 5. 14. To render our ſelves *dead* to the prevalent life of Senſe and Sin, *Rom.* 6. 8. and 11. 5. and to *ariſe* to a *new Life*, Rom. 6. 4. The *Life* of *Righteouſneſs*, and

Faith,

Faith, Hab. 2 4. A *Life* that hath other *Principles*, and other *Pleaſures*; other *Objects*, and other *Ends*, and *ſuch* as neither *Eye hath ſeen*, nor *Ear heard*, nor any of the Senſes perceived. Yea, *this* is a Life that is exerciſed in *contradiction* to the Judgments of *ſenſe*. Its *Joy*, is *Tribulation*; Jam. 1. 2. Its *Glory*, *Reproaches*; 2 Pet. 4. 14. Its *Height*, is *Lowneſs*; Luke 14. 11. Its *Greatneſs*, in being *Meaneſt*; Matth. 20. 27. And its *Riches*, in having *Nothing*; 2 *Cor.* 6. 10. To ſuch a Life as *this*, Religion is to raiſe us; and it muſt needs be *difficult* to make *us*, who are *ſo* much *Brutes*, to be *ſo* much *Angels*; *us*, who ſeem to live by nothing *elſe* but *ſenſe*, to live by *nothing leſs*; This with a witneſs is an *hard*, and *uneaſie* Work, and another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

III. A *Third* proceeds from the natural *Diſorder* and *Rage* of our *Paſſions*. Our Corrupt Natures are like the

the *troubled Sea*, Iſa. 57. 20. And our *Paſſions* are the *Waves* of that Ocean, that tumble and ſwell, and keep a mighty noiſe; they daſh againſt the Rocks, and break one againſt another; and our Peace and Happineſs is ſhipwrackt by them. *Our Paſſions make us miſerable.* We are ſometimes *ſtifled* by their *Numbers*, and *confounded* by their *Diſorders*, and *torn* to pieces by their *Violence*; mounted to the Clouds by *Ambition*, and thrown down to the *deeep* by *Deſpair*; ſcorcht by the *flames* of *Luſt*, and *overwhelmed* by the *Waters* of unſtable *Deſire*; *Paſſions* fight *one againſt another*, and *all* againſt reaſon; they prevail over the Mind, and have *uſurpt* the Government of our Actions, and involve us in continual Guilt and Miſery. This is the *natural* State of Man; and our *work* in the way of *Religion*, is to *reſtrain* this *Violence*, and to *rectifie* theſe *Diſorders*, and to *reduce* thoſe *Rebellious* Powers under the Empire and Government of the *Mind*,

Mind, their *Soveraign*. And ſo to *regain* the Divine *Image*, which conſiſts much in the *order* of our *Faculties*; and the *Subjection* of the *Brutiſh*, to the *reaſonable* Powers. *This*, I ſay, Religion aims at, to raiſe us to the *perfection* of our Natures, by *mortifying* thoſe *Members*, Col. 3. 5. our *unruly Paſſions* and *Deſires*; and *crucifying* the *Fleſh* with its *Affections* and *Luſts*; Gal. 5. 24. And thereby to make us *humble* in *Proſperity*, *quiet* in *Adverſity*; *meek* under *Provocations*, *ſteady* amidſt *Temptations*, *modeſt* in our *Deſires*, *temperate* in our *Injoyments*, *conſtant* to our *Reſolutions*, and *contented* in all *Conditions*. Here is our great Buſineſs, and our *Work is this*: And certainly 'tis no *eaſie* thing to bring *order* out of a *Chaos*, and to ſpeak a *Tempeſt* in a *Calm*; to *reſiſt* a *Torrnt*, and to *ſtop* and *turn* the *Tyde*; to *ſubdue* a *Rebellious* Rabble, and to change them from *Tyrannical* Maſters, to *Modeſt* and *Obedient* Servants: Theſe, no doubt,

are

are works of *difficulty* enough, and theſe muſt be our Imployment in the way of *Religion*; and on this ſcore alſo, the *Gate is ſtraight.*

IV. Our *Work* in *Religion* is yet more *difficult*, upon the account of *Cuſtom*, to which we are ſubject, and by which we are ſwayed much. *This* is vulgarly ſaid to be *another Nature*, and the Apoſtle calls it by *that* name, 1 Cor. 11. 14. *Doth not Nature it ſelf teach you, that if a Man have long Hair, it is a ſhame unto him?* By the word *Nature*, the beſt Interpreters ſay only *Cuſtom* is meant; ſince *long Hair* is not declared *ſhameful* by the Law and Light of Nature, taken in its chief and propereſt ſenſe: For then it had never been permitted to the *Nazarites*: But the *contrary cuſtom*, in the Nations that uſed it not, made it ſeem *ſhameful and indecent.* There are other places in Scripture and ancient Authors, wherein *Nature* is put for *Cuſtom*: But I muſt

muſt not inſiſt on *this*; the thing I am about is, that *Cuſtom* is very *powerful*; and as it makes a kind of Nature, ſo, many times it *maſters* and *ſubdues* it. Wild Creatures are hereby made gentle and familiar; and thoſe that naturally are tame enough; are made to degenerate into wildneſs by it.

And now beſides the *original* depravities of our Natures, we have *contracted* many *vitious habits* by *corrupt* and *evil* uſages; which we were drawn into at firſt by pleaſure and vanity in our young & inconſiderate years, while we were led by the directions of ſenſe: *Theſe*, by *frequent* acts, grow at laſt into *habits*; which though in their beginning they were *tender* as a Plant, and eaſie to have been cruſht or blaſted, yet *time* and *uſe* hardens them into the firmneſs of an *Oak*, that braves the Weather, and can endure the ſtroak of the Ax and a ſtrong Arm.

Now to deſtroy and root up theſe obſtinate *cuſtomary* evils, is another part

part of our Work. And Religion teacheth us to *put off concerning the Old Conversation, the Old Man*, Eph. 4. 22. and to receive *new Impressions* and *Inclinations*; to be *renewed* in the *Spirit of our Minds*, 5. 23 and to *put on the New Man*, 5. 24. To make us *new Hearts*, Ezek. 18. 31. and to *walk in newness of Life*, Rom. 6. 4. *This* we are to do, and this we may well suppose to be *hard* work; the Scripture compares it to the *changing* the *Skin* of the *Æthiopian*, and the *Spots* of the *Leopard*, Jer. 13. 23. and elsewhere. *How can they do good, that are accustomed to do evil?* Jer. 13. 23. 'Tis *hard*, no doubt; and this is another *difficulty* in *Religion*.

V. The Power that *Example* hath over us, makes the *way* of *Religion difficult*. *Example* is more *prevalent* than *Precept*, for Man is a Creature given much to *Imitation*, and we are very apt to follow what we *see others do*, rather than what we *ought to do our selves*. And

And now the Apoſtle hath told us, That *the whole World lies in wickedneſs*, 1 Joh. 5. 19. and we ſadly find it: we cannot look out of doors, but we ſee *Vanity* and *Folly*, *Senſuality and Forgetfulneſs* of God; *Pride* and *Covetouſneſs*, *Injuſtice* and *Intemperance*, and all other kinds of Evils: Theſe we meet with every where, in *Publick* Companies, and *Private* Converſations; in the *High Ways*, and in the *Corners* of the *Streets*.

The Sum is, *Example* is very *powerful*, and *Examples* of *Vice* are always in our Eyes; we are apt to be reconciled to *that* which *every one doth*, and to do like it; we love the *troden Path*, and care not to walk in the *Way* which is gone in but by a *few*.

This is our *Condition*, and our *work* in *Religion* is, to *overcome* the ſtrong Biaſs of corrupt *Example*; to *ſtrive* againſt the *Stream*, to learn to be *good*, though *few* are *ſo*, and not to follow *a Multitude to do Evil*, Exod. 23. 2. *This* is our *Buſineſs*;

neſs; and *this* is very *Difficult*.

VI. The laſt *Difficulty* I ſhall mention, ariſeth from *Worldly Intereſts* and *Engagements*. We have many *Neceſſities* to ſerve, both in our Perſons and our Families. Nature excluded us *naked* into the World, without *Cloathing* for *Warmth*, or *Armature* for *Defence*; and *Food* is not provided to our Hands, as it is for the Beaſts; nor do our *Houſes* grow for our Habitation, and comfortable abode. Nothing is prepared for our uſe without our Induſtry and Endeavours. So that by the *Neceſſity* of *this State*, we are engaged in *Worldly Affairs*: *Theſe*, *Nature* requires us to mind, and *Religion* permits it; and nothing can be done without our *Care*; and *Care* would be very *troubleſome*, if there were not ſome *Love* to the *Objects* we exerciſe our Cares upon: Hence it is, that *ſome Cares* about the things of *this* world, and *Love* to them is allowed us; and

and we are commanded to continue in the *Calling wherein God hath ſet us*, 1 Cor. 7. 20. and are warned that we be not *ſlothful in Buſineſs*, Rom. 12. 11. We may take *ſome delight* alſo in the Creatures that God gives us, and love them in their *degree*: For the *animal* Life may have its *moderate Gratifications*; *God made all things, that they might enjoy their Being.*

And now, notwithſtanding all *this*, Religion commands us to *ſet our Affections upon things above*, Col. 3. 2. not to *love the World*, 1 Joh. 2. 15. to be *careful for nothing*, Phil. 4. 6. to take no *thought for to morrow*, Mat. 6. 34. The meaning of which Expreſſions is, That we ſhould *love God* and *Heavenly things*, in the *chief* and *firſt place*; and avoid the *immoderate Deſires* of *Worldly Love* and *Cares*. This is our *Duty:* and 'tis very *difficult*: For by reaſon of the *hurry* of *Buſineſs*, and thoſe *Paſſions* that *Earthly* Engagements excite;

we

we *conſider* not things as we ſhould, and *ſo*, many times perceive not the *Bounds* of our *Permiſſions*, and the *Beginnings* of our *Reſtraints*; where the *allowed* Meaſure *ends*, and the *forbidden* Degree *commenceth*: what is the difference between that *Care* that is a *Duty*, and *that* which is a *Sin*; *Providence* and *Carking*; and between *that Love* of the *World* which is *Neceſſary* and *Lawful*, and that which is *Extravagant* and *Inordinate?* I ſay, by reaſon of the hurry we are in, amidſt Buſineſs and worldly Delights, we many times *perceive not our Bounds*, and ſo ſlide eaſily into *Earthly-mindedneſs* and *anxiety*. And it is hard for us, who are engaged ſo much in the World, and who need it ſo much, who converſe ſo much with it and about it, and whoſe time and endeavours are ſo unavoidably taken up by it; I ſay 'tis hard for us, in ſuch Circumſtances, to be *crucified to the World*, Gal. 6. 14. and to all *inordinate Affe-*

ctions

tions to it: to live *above* it and to settle our *chief* Delights and Cares on things at great *distance* from us, which are *unsuitable* to our *corrupt* Appetites, and *contrary* to the most *relishing Enjoyments* of *Flesh*; which *Sense* never *saw* nor *felt*, and which the *Imagination* it self could never *grasp*. *This*, no doubt, is *hard Exercise*, and this must be done in the *way* of *Religion*; and on this Account also, it is very *difficult*.

Thus of the First *Proposition*, *That there are great Difficulties in Religion.* I come now to the *Second*.

II. *That those Difficulties may be overcome by striving*; which imports both the *Encouragement* and the *Means*; That *they may be vanquisht*, and *how*.

(1.) That the *Difficulties may be subdued*, is clearly enough implyed, in the *Precept*; we should not have been commanded to *strive*, if it had been *impossible* to overcome. God doth

doth not put his Creatures upo
fruitleſs Undertakings: He never re
quires us to do any thing in orde
to *that*, which is not to be *attaine*
Therefore when he was reſolved no
to be intreated for that ſtubborn an
rebellious Nation. He would no
have the Prophet pray for them, *Je*
7. 16. *Pray not for this People, for*
will not hear thee. He would not b
petitioned for *that*, which he was de
termined not to *grant*. He puts no
his Creatures upon any *vain* Exp
ctations and Endeavours; nor woul
he have them deceive themſelves b
fond Dependences. When one mad
this Profeſſion to our Saviour, *Lor*
I will follow thee whitherſoever tho
goeſt. *Chriſt* tells him, that he mu
expect from him no worldly Honou
or Preferments; no Power or ſenſu
al Pleaſure, no, not ſo much as th
ordinary Accommodations of Life
The Foxes have Holes, and the Bird
of the Ayre have Neſts, but the So
of Man hath not where to lay his Hea
Luk

Luk. 9. 5, 8. He would not have the man that likely might look for *theſe*, upon the opinion of his being the *Meſſias*, in the *Jewiſh* ſenſe, one that ſhould at laſt, whatever the meanneſs of his Condition was at preſent, appear as a *Mighty*, and *Triumphant temporal Monarch*; I ſay, our Saviour would not have the Man follow him for *that*, which he had not to beſtow upon him. Since then that he who would not put us upon *fruitleſs* labours, hath *commanded* us to *ſtrive* to *enter*; 'tis evident, that an entrance may be procured into the Gate by *ſtriving*, and that the *Difficulties* may *be overcome.*

The next thing in my Method is to ſhew, *How*; the *manner* is *implyed* in the *Text*; and *expreſt* in the *Propoſition*, *viz.* By *ſtriving*; and by *this*, is meant, a *reſolute* uſe of thoſe means that are the Inſtruments of Happineſs. They are three, *Faith*, *Prayer*, and *active Endeavour.*

(I.) *Faith* is a *chief* Inſtrument, for the *overcoming* the *Difficulties* of our way.

And *Faith* in the *general*, is the *belief* of a *Teſtimony*; *Divine Faith* the belief of a *Divine* Teſtimony; and the chief things to be believed, as *encouragements* and *means* for a Victory over the Difficulties in Religion, are *theſe*; *That God is reconciled to us by his Son*; *That he will aſſiſt our weak endeavours by the Aids of his Spirit*; *That he will reward us if we ſtrive as we ought, with immortal Happineſs in a World of endleſs Glory.*

By our belief of God's being *reconciled*, we are ſecured from thoſe *fears*, that might diſcourage our approaches and endeavours, upon the account of his *Purity* and *Juſtice*. By the *Faith* of his *Aſſiſtance*, all the *objections* againſt our *ſtriving*, that ariſe from the *greatneſs* of the *Difficulties*, and the *diſproportionate ſmalneſs* of our *Strength*, are anſwered. And from our believing *eternal rewards* in another World, we have a mighty

mighty *motive* to engage our utmoſt diligence, to conteſt with all difficulties that would keep us from it.

What *ſatisfaction* is there, ſaith the believer, in the *gratification* of my *corrupt Inclinations* and *Senſes*, in compariſon with *that*, which ariſeth from the *favour* of *God*, and an *Intereſt* in his *Son?* What difficulties in my *Duty*, *too* great for *Divine* Aids? What *pains* are we to undergo in the *narrow* and *difficult* way, that the *Glory* which is at the end of it, will not *compenſate?* What is it to *deny* a *baſe* Inclination that will undo me; in *obedience* to him that *made*, and *redeemed* me; and to deſpiſe the little things of *preſent* ſenſe, for the hope of *everlaſting enjoyments*; *Trifling* pleaſure, for *Hallelujahs?* What were it for me to ſet *vigorouſly* upon thoſe *Paſſions* that degrade my noble Nature, and make me a *ſlave* and a *beaſt*, and will make me *more* vile, and *more* miſerable; when the *Spirit* of the moſt High is at my *right* hand to aſ-

ſiſt me? Why ſhould my noble Faculties, that were deſigned for glorious ends, be led into infamous practices by *baſe Uſages*, and *diſhonourable Cuſtoms?* What is the *example* of a *wicked*, *ſenſual*, *wretched* World, to *that* of the *Holy Jeſus*; and all the *Army* of *Prophets*, *Apoſtles* and *Martyrs?* What is there in the *World*, that *it* ſhould be *loved* more than *God?* and what is the *Fleſh*, that it ſhould have *more* of our *time* and *care*, than the great intereſts of our Souls?

Such are the *Conſiderations* of a mind, that *Faith* hath awakened; and by *them* it is prepared for *vigorous ſtriving*. So that *Faith* is the *Spring* of *all*; and *neceſſary* to the other two *Inſtruments* of our *Happineſs*. Beſides which, it is acceptable to God, in it *ſelf*, and ſo diſpoſeth us for his *gracious helps*, by which we are enabled to overcome the Difficulties of our way. While a man conſiders the *Difficulties* only, and weighs them againſt his own *ſtrength*, let him ſuppoſe

ſuppoſe the *Liberty* of his *Will* to be what he pleaſeth, yet while 'tis under *ſuch* diſadvantages, *that* will ſignifie very little; and he that ſees no *further*, ſits down in diſcouragement; But when the mind is fortified with the firm belief of *Divine help*, he attempts then with a *noble vigour*, which cannot *miſcarry*, if it do not *cool* and *faint*. For *he that endures to the end, ſhall be ſaved*, Mat. 24. 13. Thus *Faith* ſets the other Inſtruments of Happineſs on work, and therefore 'tis deſervedly reckoned as the *firſt*; and 'tis *that* which muſt always accompany the *exerciſes* of *Religion*, and give them *life* and *motion*.

(II.) *Prayer* is another *means* we muſt uſe, in order to our *overcoming* the *Difficulties* of the way. Our own meer, natural *Strength* is *weakneſs*; and without *ſupernatural* helps thoſe Difficulties are not to be ſurmounted. *Thoſe Aids* are *neceſſary*, and *God* is *ready* to beſtow them on us; For

He would have all men to be ſaved, and *to come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. But for *theſe things he will be ſought unto.* And 'tis very *juſt*, and *fit* that we ſhould addreſs our ſelves to him by *Prayer*, to acknowledge our own *inſufficiency* and *dependence*, on him for the mercies we expect; and thereby to own *Him* for the *giver* of *every good* and *perfect gift*; and to inſtruct our ſelves how his favours are to be *received* and *uſed*, *viz.* with *Reverence* and *Thanksgiving*: This, 'tis highly *fit* we ſhould do; and the doing it *prepares* us for his bleſſings; and he fails not to *beſtow* them on thoſe that are *prepared* by *Faith* and *Prayer*; *For he giveth liberally and upbraids not*; And our *Prayers* are required, not as if they could *move* his *will*, which is *always* graciouſly *inclined* to our *Happineſs*; But as it's *that tribute* which we owe our *Maker* and *Benefactor*; and *that* without which 'tis not ſo *fit* he ſhould beſtow his *particular*

ticular favours on us. For it by no means becomes the Divine Majeſty, to vouchſafe the *ſpecialties* of his *Grace* and *Goodneſs* to thoſe, that are not *ſenſible* they *want* them; and are not *humbled* to a *due* apprehenſion of their *weakneſs* and dependence. But for ſuch as are *ſo*, and expreſs their humble deſires in the *Ardours* of *Holy Prayer*, God never *denies* them the *aſſiſtances* of his *Spirit*: *For if ye being evil* (ſaith our Saviour) *know how to give good gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to thoſe that ask Him?* Mat. 7. 11.

And *Theſe Divine Helps* obtain'd by *Faith and Prayer*, and join'd with our *active conſtant endeavour*, will not fail to *enable* us to *overcome* the *Difficulties*, and to procure us an entrance at the *ſtraight Gate*. And ſo I come to the *Third Inſtrument* of our *Happineſs*, which is implyed in *ſtriving*, viz.

(III.) *Active Endeavour*, in which *Repentance* and the *fruits* of it are implied; Both *Faith* and *Prayer* are in order to *this*; and without it neither can turn to account. For *Faith without works is dead*, Jam. 2. 20. and *Prayer without endeavour fruitleſs*; yea indeed, in the Divine Eſtimate, it is *none at all*: 'Tis *bodily* exerciſe; *no Prayer*. For when we invoke *Gods help*, we *deſire* it, that we may *uſe* it; *Divine Grace is not a Treaſure to lay up by us, but an Inſtrument to work with*; and when we pray that God would *aſſiſt* us in our *endeavours*, and *endeavour not at all*, we *mock* God, and *trifle* with him in our Prayers: *Endeavour* then is *neceſſary*, and neceſſary in a degree ſo eminent, that *this* is always included in *Faith* when 'tis taken in the *higheſt* and nobleſt *Evangelical ſenſe*, viz. for the *Faith* which *juſtifies* and *ſaves*; for *that* comprehends *all* thoſe *endeavours*, and their *fruits*, whereby we are made happy.

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We muſt not expect that God ſhould do *all* (*exclusively*) in the work of our Salvation. He doth *his* part, and we muſt do *ours*; (though we do *that*, by his help too.) *He that made us without our ſelves, will not ſave us without our ſelves*, ſaid the Father. We are commanded to ſeek, *Mat.* 7. 7. To *Run*, 1 Cor. 9. 24. To *fight*, 1 Tim. 6. 12. To *give diligence*, 2 Pet. 1. 10. *Theſe all* import *Action* and *Endeavour*. And that endeavour muſt not be only a *faint* purpoſe, or *formal* ſervice; but it muſt be imployed in the *higheſt degree* of *Care* and *Diligence*. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth violence*, Mat. 11. 12. and this violence muſt not be uſed in an *heat*, and *ſudden* fit *only*; that *cools* and *dies*, and contents it ſelf with having been *warm* for a time: But it muſt be a *ſteady* and *conſtant* courſe of *activity*, a continual *ſtriving* to overcome the remaining *difficulties* of the *way*.

We muſt *endeavour vigorouſly* and

conſtantly; and in *that*, (after our *Faith* is ſtrengthened by *deep conſideration*, and *Divine aſſiſtance* implored by *ardent Prayer*) our courſe is,

(1.) *To abſtain from all the outward actions of Sin*, and *to perform the external acts of the contrary Vertues. To ceaſe to do evil*, Iſa. 1. 16. is the firſt ſtep. When the *Publicans* askt *John* the *Baptiſt*, Luke 3. 12. what they ſhould do; His direction was, that they *ſhould not exact*, verſ. 13. and to the *Souldiers*, asking the ſame queſtion, he anſwers, *Do Violence to no man*, verſ. 14. *Theſe* were the ſins of their *particular* Profeſſions, which were to be *quitted*, before any thing could be done *higher*. We have ordinarily more power over our *actions*, than our *habits*, and therefore we ſhould *begin* here, and reſolve deeply, by divine help, to cut off thoſe *ſupplies* that feed *vitious inclinations*; for *wicked habits* are maintain'd by *actions* of *Wickedneſs*; when *they* ceaſe, the *inclinations* grow more *faint*, and *weak*:

weak: and when we are come but *thus far*, to have *confined* our *luſts*, we ſhall be encouraged to proceed to deſtroy them. 'Tis ſaid, There is no great diſtance between a *Princes Priſon* and his *Grave*; The ſaying is moſt true in the caſe of *Tyrants* and *Uſurpers*; and the *habits* of ſin are *both*; when they are *reſtrain'd*, they are not far from being *deſtroyed*, if we imploy our endeavours, and the divine aids, as we ought.

This then muſt be done *Firſt*, and the *other* part of the advice muſt be taken with it, *viz.* we *muſt practiſe the outward actions of the contrary Vertues.* We *muſt do well*, when we *ceaſe to do evil.* When we turn from darkneſs, it muſt be to light, *Acts* 26. 18. Not from *one* kind of *darkneſs* to *another.* When we *ceaſe* to *oppreſs*, we muſt be *charitable*; when we leave to *tyrannize* over our *inferiours*, we muſt be *kind* and *helpful* to them. When we forbear to *ſlander*, we muſt *ſpeak* all the *good* we can of our Neighbour. The

The *outward* actions of Vertue are in our *power*; and 'tis ſomewhat to come ſo far as *this:* What is *more*, viz. The *inward love and delight in goodneſs*, will ſucceed in time, if we perſevere. 'Tis not ſafe for us to propoſe to our ſelves the greateſt heights at firſt; if we do, we are diſcouraged, and fall back. God accepts even of that *little*, if it be in order to *more*. He deſpiſeth not the day of ſmall things, *Zech.* 4. 10. If thou doſt well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? Chriſt *loved* the *young man* who had kept the *external* part of the *Commandments*, Mark 10. 12. If he had had the courage to have proceeded; what he had done, would have ſteaded him much. The *inward* love of *Vertue* and *Holineſs* is promoted by the *outward* exerciſes of them, and hereby the *contrary* evils are both *pined* and *thruſt out*.

Thus of the *Firſt* thing that *Endeavour* implies; upon this muſt follow,

(2.) *An attempt upon evil habits*, viz.

Thoſe

Thoſe that have been ſuper-induced on us by *Careleſneſs* and *Temptation*, bad *Cuſtoms* and *evil Company*. *Every victory is a means to another*; *we* grow *ſtronger*, and the *enemy weaker* by it. To have overcome the *outward* acts of ſin, is a *beginning* in our *ſpiritual* warfare; but our *chief* enemies are the *habits*; *theſe* muſt be attempted alſo, but with *Prudence*; wild *Beaſts* are not to be dealt with by *main ſtrength*; Art and Stratagem muſt be uſed in this War; and 'tis *good policy*, I think here, to fight the *leaſt* powerful foes *firſt*, the *contracted* habits, before we fall on the *inbred natural* Inclinations. While our forces are weak, 'tis dangerous ſetting upon the ſtrongeſt holds, *viz.* the vices of *Complexion*, which are woven into our *very Natures*. If a man apply all his *force* where he hath not *reſolution* enough to go through with what he undertakes, he receives a foyl, and 'tis odds but he ſits down and faints. *Prudence* therefore is to be

be uſed, where we diſtruſt our ſtrength: Fall upon *Sin*, where 'tis *weakeſt*, where it hath *leaſt* of *Nature*, and leaſt of *Temptation*; and where we have arguments from *Reputation* and *worldly Intereſts* wherewith to war againſt it. If we *prevail*, we are heartned by the *ſucceſs*: Our *Faith* and *Reſolution* will grow *ſtronger* by this experience, when we have triumph't over the ſins of *evil Cuſtom*, *Example*, and *ſenſual Indulgence*.

And when that is done, we muſt remember that 'tis not enough that thoſe *habits* are thruſt out; *others* muſt be planted in their *room:* when the ſoyl is *prepared*, the *ſeed* muſt be ſown, and the *ſeeds* of vertuous *habits*, are the *actions* of vertue. Theſe I recommended under the laſt head, and ſhall ſay more of the introducing of *habits*, under *one* that follows on purpoſe.

(3.) The next advance in our endeavours, is, In the Strength of God, and in the Name of his Son, to aſſault the greater Devils, and to ſtrive

to

to caſt out them; I mean the *Sins* of *Complexion*, and *particular* Nature. This is a *great* work, and will require *ſtrong Faith*, and *many Prayers*, and *much Time*, and *great Watchfulneſs*, and *invincible Reſolution:* Imploy *theſe heartily*; and though thou now and then mayſt receive a foyl, yet give not off ſo, but riſe again in the ſtrength of *God*, implore *new* aid, and fortifie thy ſelf with *more* conſiderations, and *deeper* reſolves; and *then* renew the *Combat* upon the *encouragement* of *Divine Aſſiſtance*, and *Chriſt's Merits* and *Interceſſion*, and the *promiſe* that ſin *ſhall not have Dominion over us*, Rom. 6. 14.

Remember, that *this* is the *great* work, and the biggeſt *difficulty*; if this be not overcome, all our *other labour* hath been in *vain*, and will be *loſt*. If this *root* remain, it will ſtill bear *poyſonous* fruit, which will be *matter* for *Temptation*, and occaſion of *continual falling*; and we ſhall be in danger of being reconciled again

to

to our *old* ſins, and to *undo* all; and ſo *our latter end will be worſe than our beginning*, 2 Pet. 2. 20. Or, at leaſt, though we ſtand at a ſtay, and ſatisfie our ſelves with *that*; yet though we are *contented*, our condition is not *ſafe*.

If we will endeavour to any purpoſe of *duty*, or *ſecurity*, we muſt *proceed* ſtill after our *leſſer conqueſts*, till the *ſins* of *Complexion* are laid *dead* at our feet. He that is born of *God*, ſinneth not, and he cannot ſin, 1. *Joh.* 3. 9. Till we come to *this*, we are but *ſtrugling* in the *Birth*.

Such a *perfection* as is *mortifying* of *vitious temper*, is *I* hope *attainable*, and 'tis no doubt that which *Religion* aims at; and though it be a *difficult height*, yet we muſt not ſit down this ſide: At leaſt we muſt be always preſſing on to this Mark: if Providence *cut* off our days before we have arrived to it, we may expect acceptance of the *ſincerity* of our endeavours, upon the account of the *merits* of our Saviour:

Saviour: For he hath procured favour for thoſe *ſincere* Believers and Endeavoureres, whoſe Day is done before their work is compleated; *this I* mean, of ſubduing the *darling* ſins of their *particular Natures.*

But then if we *reſt*, and pleaſe our ſelves with the *little Victories* and Attainments, and let theſe our *great Enemies* quietly alone, 'tis an argument our *endeavours* are not *ſincere*, but much ſhort of that *ſtriving*, which will procure an *entrance* into the *ſtraight Gate.* The next thing (and 'tis the laſt *I* ſhall mention) which is implyed in *ſtriving*, is,

(4.) *To furniſh our ſelves, through Divine Grace, with the Habits and Inclinations of Holineſs and Vertue.* For *Goodneſs* to become a kind of *Nature* to the Soul, is *height* indeed; but ſuch a one as *may* be reacht: the new Nature, and new Creature, *Gal. 6. 15.* are not meer names.

We have obſerv'd that ſome men are of a *Natural Generoſity*, *Veracity* and

and *Sweetneſs*; and they *cannot* act contrary to theſe *Native* Vertues without a mighty *Violence:* why now ſhould not the *New Nature* be as *powerful* as the *Old?* And why may not the *Spirit of God*, working by an active Faith and Endeavour, fix *Habits* and *Inclinations* on the Soul, as prevalent as *thoſe?* No doubt, it *may*, and *doth*, upon the Diviner Souls: For whom to do a *wicked*, or *unworthy Action*, 'twould be as *violent* and *unnatural*, as for the *meek* and *compaſſionate* temper to *butcher* the *innocent*; or for him, that is *naturally juſt*, to *oppreſs* and make a *prey* of the *Fatherleſs* and the *Widow*. I ſay, ſuch a *degree* of *perfection* as this, ſhould be aim'd at, *Heb.* 6. 1. and we ſhould not ſlacken or intermit our endeavours till it be attain'd.

In order to it, we are to uſe frequent *meditation* on the *excellency* and *pleaſure* of Vertue and Religion; and *earneſt Prayer* for the *Grace* of God; and *diligent attendance* upon the *publick*

lick worſhip; and *pious* Company and Converſes: For this great *deſign*, theſe helps are requiſite, and if we exerciſe our ſelves in them as we ought, they will *fire* our Souls with the *love* of God and Goodneſs; and ſo at laſt, *all* Chriſtian *Vertues* will become as *natural* to us, as *ſin* was before. And to *one* that is ſo *prepared*, the *Gate* of *Happineſs* will be *open*, and of *eaſie* entrance; the *difficulties* are *overcome*, and from henceforth the *way* is *pleaſant* and plain before him, *Prov.* 3. 17.

Thus *I* have ſhewn, that the *formidable difficulties* may be *overcome*, and *How*: 'tis a *plain courſe I* have *directed*, that will not puzzle mens *underſtandings* with *needleſs niceties*, nor *diſtract* their *memories* with *multitudes*. Let us walk in this way, and do it *conſtantly*, with *vigour* and *alacrity*; and there is no fear, but in the *Strength of* God, through the *merits* and *mediation* of his Son, we ſhall *overcome*, and at laſt *enter*.

I had now done with this *general* Head,

Head, but that 'tis neceſſary to note three things more.

(1.) Thoſe *Inſtruments* of our Happineſs which we muſt uſe in *ſtriving*, viz. *Faith*, *Prayer*, and *active Endeavour*, *muſt all of them be imployed.* Not any *one* ſingly, will do the great work; nor can the *others*, if *any one* be wanting. If we *believe*, and do not *pray*; or *pray*, and *do not endeavour*; or *endeavour*, without *thoſe*, the *Difficulties* will remain, and 'twill be impoſſible for us to *enter.*

(2.) *We muſt be diligent in our courſe*: If we do not exerciſe *Faith vigorouſly*, and *pray heartily*, and *endeavour with our whole might*, the means will not ſucceed; and 'tis as good not at all, as not to purpoſe. The Difficulties will not be overcome by *cold Faith*, or *ſleepy Prayers*, or *remiſs Endeavours*: A very *intenſe degree* of theſe is *neceſſary.*

(3.) *Our ſtriving muſt be conſtant*; we muſt not *begin*, and *look back*; Heb. 10. 38. or *run* a while, and *ſtop* in

in *midd* courſe, 1 *Cor.* 9. 24. and content our ſelves with *ſome* attainments, and think we have *arrived*, Phil. 3. 14. If we do ſo, we ſhall find our ſelves dangerouſly miſtaken. The *Crown* is at the *end* of the *Warfare*, & the *Priſe* at the *end* of the *Race*. If we will ſucceed, we muſt hold on: *The life of one that ſtrives as he ought, muſt be a continual motion forwards*; always *proceeding*, always *growing*.

If we *ſtrive thus*, we cannot *fail*; if any of theſe *qualifications* be wanting, we *cannot but* miſcarry. And hence no doubt it is, that many that *ſeek* to *enter*, *ſhall not be able*, and the preſumed ſons of the Kingdom are ſhut out, *Mat.* 8. 12. They *ſeek*, and are very deſirous to be admitted; They do *ſome* thing, and *ſtrive*; but their *ſtriving* is *partial*, or *careleſs*, or *ſhort*; by reaſon of which defects, they *do* not *overcome*, and *ſhall* not *enter*.

This is a *dangerous* Rock, and perhaps there are as many undone by *cold* and *half ſtriving*, as by not *ſtriving*

ving at all. He that hath done *ſome* thing, *preſumes* he is *ſecure*; He goes the round of ordinary Duties, but advanceth nothing in his way; He *overcometh* none of the great *Difficulties*, none of the *Habits* or *depraved Inclinations*; He is contented with *other* things that make a more *glorious ſhew*; though they *ſignifie leſs*; and perhaps deſpiſeth *theſe*, under the notion of *Morality*; and ſo preſuming, that he is a *Saint too ſoon*, he never comes to be *one at all:* ſuch are the *Seekers that ſhall not be able to enter:* Their *ſeeking* imports *ſome ſtriving*; but 'tis *ſuch*, as, though it be *ſpecious*, yet it is *imperfect*, and will not ſucceed. And hence the *Third Propoſition* ariſeth, that I propoſed to diſcourſe.

(III.) THat *there is a ſort of Striving that will not procure an entrance:* implyed in theſe words, *For many will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able.*

'Tis a dangerous thing to be flattered

tered into a *falſe peace*; and to take up with *imperfect Godlineſs*; to reconcile the *hopes* of *Heaven* to our *beloved ſins*, and to judge our condition *ſafe* upon *inſufficient grounds*. *This* multitudes *do*, and 'tis the great danger of our days; Men cannot be *contented* without doing *ſomething* in Religion; but they are *contented with a little*. And then they reckon themſelves *godly*, before they are *vertuous*; and take themſelves to be *Saints*, upon ſuch things as will not diſtinguiſh a *good man* from a *bad*.

We ſeek after *Marks* of *Godlineſs*, and would be glad to know, *how* we might try our ſtate: The thing is of great importance; and if the *Signs* we judge by are either *falſe*, or *imperfect*, we are deceived to our undoing. Meer *Speculative* miſtakes about Opinions, do no great hurt; but errour in the *Marks* and *Meaſures* of *Religion* is deadly. Now there are ſundry things commonly taken for *ſigns* of *Godlineſs*, which though

though they are *ſomething*, yet they are not *enough*; They are *hopeful* for *beginnings*, but nothing worth when they are our *end* and *reſt*. They are a kind of *ſeeking* aud *imperfect ſtriving*; but not *ſuch* as *overcometh* the *difficulties* of the way, or will procure us an *entrance* at the *Gate*. Therefore to diſable the *flattering*, *inſufficient Marks* of *Godlineſs*, I ſhall diſcover in purſuance of the *Third Propoſition*, *How far a man may ſtrive in the exerciſes of Religion, and yet be found at laſt among thoſe ſeekers that ſhall not be able to enter*. And though I have intimated ſomething of this in the general before, yet I ſhall now more particularly ſhew it in the *inſtances* that follow. And in *theſe* I ſhall diſcover a *Religion* that may be called *Animal*, to which the *natural* man may attain.

(I.) *A Man may believe the Truths of the Goſpel, and aſſent heartily to all the Articles of the Creed:* and if he

he *proceeds* not, he is no further by *this*, than the *faith* of *Devils*, Jam. 2. 19.

(2.) He may go on, *and have a great thirſt to be more acquainted with Truth*; He may ſeek it diligently in *Scripture*, and *Sermons*, and good *Books*, and *knowing Company*; And yet *do this*, by the *motion* of no *higher Principle*, than an *inbred* Curioſity, and *deſire* of *Knowledg*; and many-times this *earneſtneſs* after *Truth*, proceeds from a *proud effectation* to wiſer than our Neighbours, that we may *pity* their *darkneſs*; or the itch of a *diſputing* humour, that we may out talk them; or a deſign to carry on, or make a party, that we may be called *Rabbi*, or ſerve an Intereſt: and the *zeal* for *Truth* that is ſet on work by ſuch motives, is a *ſpark* of that *fire* that is from *beneath*: 'Tis *dangerous* to a *mans ſelf*, and to the *publick Weal* of the *Church* and *mankind*, but the man proceeds, and is,

(3.) *Very much concern'd to defend and propagate his Faith*; and the Phariſees were ſo in relation to theirs, *Matt.* 23. 15. and ſo have been many Profeſſors of *all* the Religions that are, or ever were. Men *naturally* love their *own* Tenents, and are ambitious to mould *others judgments* according to *theirs*. There is *glory* in being an *Inſtructer* of other men; and turning them to *our ways* and *opinions*: So that here is nothing yet *above* Nature; nothing but what may be found in *many* that *ſeek*, and are *ſhut out*. But,

(4.) *Faith* works greater effects than *theſe*, and *Men offer themſelves to Martyrdom for it*; *This*, one would think, ſhould be the *greateſt* height, and an argument that *all* the *difficulties* of the way, are *overcome* by one that is *ſo reſolved*; and that the *Gate* cannot but be *opened* to him. And ſo, no doubt *it is*, *when all things elſe are ſutable*: But otherwiſe *theſe* conſequences by no means follow.

St.

St. *Paul* ſuppoſeth that a man may give his *Body to be burned*, and not have *Charity*, without which his *Martyrdom* will not profit, 1 *Cor.* 13. For one to *deny* his Religion, or what he believes to be *certain*, and of *greateſt conſequence*, is *diſhonourable* and *baſe*: and *ſome* out of principles of meer *natural bravery*, will *die* rather than they will do it; and yet, upon other accounts be far enough from being *heroically vertuous*. Beſides, the deſire of the *glory* of *Martyrdom* and *Saintſhip* after it, may in *ſome* be *ſtronger* than the *terrours* of *Death*: and we ſee frequently, that men will ſacrifice their *lives* to their *Honour* and Reputation; yea to the moſt contemptible *ſhadows* of it. And there is no *paſſion* in us ſo *weak*, no *luſt* ſo *impotent*, but hath, in many inſtances, prevail'd over the *fear of dying*. *Every Appetite* hath had its *Martyrs*; and all *Religions theirs*; and though a man give his Body to be burnt for the *beſt*, and have not

Charity, viz. *Prevalent love to God and Men*, it will not ſignifie: So that *Martyrdom* is no infallible *mark*, nor will it avail any thing, except *ſincere endeavour* to *overcome* the greater *difficulties*, have gone before it. Thus far *Faith* may go without effect: and yet one ſtep further.

(5.) *Men may confidently rely upon Chriſt for Salvation, and be firmly perſwaded that he hath juſtified, and will make them happy.* They may *appropriate* him to themſelves, and be pleaſed mightily in the opinion of his being *theirs*. And yet notwithſtanding this confidence may be in the number of thoſe *ſeekers* that ſhall not *enter*. For Chriſt is the Author of *Eternal life*, only *to thoſe that obey him*, Heb. 5. 9. and to *obey* him, is to *ſtrive vigorouſly* and *conſtantly*, to *overcome* all our *ſinful Inclinations* and *Habits*. And thoſe that *truſt* he will ſave them, though they have never ſeriouſly ſet about *this work*, deceive themſelves by vain preſumption, and in effect ſay,

ſay, that he will diſſolve or diſpenſe with his Laws in their favour. For he requires us to *deny our ſelves*, Mar. 8. 34. *To mortifie the body*, Rom 8. 13. *To love enemies*, Mat. 5. 44. *To be meek*, Mat. 11. 29. *and patient*, Jam. 5. 8. *and humble*, 1 Pet. 5. 7. *and juſt*, Mat. 7. 12. *and charitable*, Heb. 13. 16. *and Holy, as he that called us is holy*, 1 Pet. 1. 15. And he hath promiſed to ſave upon no other terms; For all *theſe* are included in *Faith*, when 'tis taken in the *juſtifying* ſenſe; and *this* is the *Way* of *Happineſs* and *Salvation*: If we walk not in *this*, but in the paths of our own chooſing, our *relying upon Chriſt* is a *mockery*, and will deceive us.

We *may* indeed be *confident*, and we *ought*, that he will *ſave* all thoſe that *ſo believe* as to *obey* him; but may not truſt that he will ſave us except we are ſome of thoſe. To *rely upon Chriſt for our Salvation, muſt follow our ſincere and obedient ſtriving, and not go before it.* The miſtake

of this is exceeding dangerous, and I doubt hath been fatal to many. The ſum is to *rely on Chriſt*, without a *reſolute* and *ſteady* endeavour to overcome every ſin and temptation, will gain us nothing in the end but ſhame and diſſappointment: *For 'tis not every one that ſaith unto him, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into Heaven, but he that doth the will of his Father which is in Heaven.* Mat. 7.21. The fooliſh Virgins relyed upon him, and expected he ſhould open to them; *Lord, Lord, open to us*, Mat. 25. 11. but he kept them out, and would not *know* them, *v.* 11.

Thus of the *Firſt* imperfect *Mark* of *Godlineſs*; *A man may upon the account of meer Nature, arrive to all the mentioned degrees of Faith; and yet if his endeavours in the practice of Chriſtian vertues be not ſuitable, he will certainly come ſhort at laſt.*

(II.) A man may be very *devout*, given much to *Prayer*, and be very *frequent*

frequent and *earneſt* in *it*; He may have the *gift* of *expreſſing* himſelf *fluently*, without the help of *Form* or *Meditation*: yea, and ſo *intent* and taken up in theſe exerciſes, that he may as it were be raviſh't out of himſelf by the *fervours* of his *Spirit*; ſo that he really kindles very *high Affections* as well in others, as in himſelf: And yet if he *reſts* in *this*, and ſuch like things as *Religion*, and reckons that he is accepted of God for it; if he allow himſelf in any *unmortified* luſts, and thinks to *compound* for them by his *Prayers*, he is *an evil man* notwithſtanding, and one of thoſe *ſeekers* that ſhall *not be able to enter*. The *Phariſees*, we know, were *much given* to *Prayer*: They were *long* in thoſe *Devotions*, and very *earneſt in them*, often repeating the ſame expreſſions out of vehemence. *Ignatius Loyola*, founder of the Jeſuites, was a man almoſt *ecſtatical* in his *Prayers*; and *Hacket* the Blaſphemer, executed in the days of

Queen *Elizabeth*, was a perſon of *Seraphical Devotion*, and would *pray* thoſe that heard him even into *tranſports*. *Baſilides* the cruel Duke of *Moſco*, is ſaid to have his hands almoſt continually lifted up in Prayer, except when they were imployed in ſome barbarous and bloody Execution: And we have *known* and *felt* one not much unlike him. There are infinite inſtances in our days of this *dangerous* ſort of *evil men*.

And we may learn hence, that the greateſt gift of *Prayer*, and *earneſtneſs* and *frequency* in it, is no good *mark* of *Godlineſs*, except it be attended with *ſincere*, *conſtant* and *vertuous* endeavours.

For ſome men have a *natural ſpice* of *Devotion* in a *Religious Melancholy*, which is their temper; and *ſuch* have commonly *ſtrong Imaginations* and *zealous affections*, which when they are heated, *flame forth* into great *heights* and *expreſſions* of *Devotion*: The *warm Fancy* furniſheth *words* and

and *matter* readily and unexpectedly, which many times begets in the man a conceit that he is *inſpired*, and that his *Prayers* are the *breathings* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; or at leaſt, that he is *extraordinarily* aſſiſted by it; which belief kindles his affections yet *more*, and he is carryed beyond himſelf, even into the *third Heavens*, and *Suburbs* of *Glory*, as he fancies, and *ſo* he makes no doubt, but that he is a *Saint* of the *firſt* rank, and ſpecial favourite of Heaven; when all this while, he may be really a *bad* man full of *Envy* and *Malice*; *Pride* and *Covetouſneſs*; *Scorn* and *ill Nature*; *contempt of his Betters*, and *diſobedience to his Governours*. And while it is *ſo*, notwithſtanding thoſe *glorious* things, he is no further than the *Phariſee*. *Hearty* and *humble deſire*, though *imperfectly* expreſt, and without this *pomp*, and thoſe *wonders*, is far more acceptable to God, who delights not in the *exerciſes* of *meer Nature* Pſal. 147. 10. but is well pleaſed with

the expreſſions of *Grace* in thoſe that fear him.

So that a *ſincere* and *lowly-minded* Chriſtian that talks of no *immediate* incomes, or *communications*; and perhaps durſt not, out of *reverence*, truſt to his own preſent conceptions in a work ſo *ſolemn*, but uſeth the help of ſome *pious form* of words ſutable to his *deſires* and *wants*, who is duly *ſenſible* of his *ſins*, and the neceſſity of *overcoming* them; and is *truly* and *earneſtly* deſirous of the Divine *aids*, in order to it: ſuch a one as *this* Prays by the Spirit, and will be aſſiſted by it; while the *other* doth all by *meer Nature* and *Imitation*, and ſhall not have thoſe *ſpiritual* aids which he never *heartily deſires* nor *intends* to *uſe*.

This, I think, I may *truly* and *ſafely* ſay: But for the Controverſie between *Forms* and *Conceived Prayers*, which of them is *abſolutely beſt*, I determine nothing of it here. And indeed I ſuppoſe that in their own nature,

nature, they are alike indifferent, and are more or leſs accepted, as they partake more or leſs of the *Spirit* of *Prayer*, viz. of *Faith*, *Humility* and *holy deſire* of the good things we pray for; and a man may *have theſe* that prays by a *Form*; and he may *want* them that takes the *other* way, and thinks himſelf in a diſpenſation much above it. So that my buſineſs is not to ſet up one of theſe ways of Devotion againſt the other, but to ſhew, that the *heights* and vehemencies of many *warm* people in their *unpremeditated* Prayers, have nothing in them *ſupernatural* or *Divine*, and conſequently, of themſelves, they are no *marks* of *Godlineſs*: which I hope no one thinks I ſpeak to diſcredit thoſe *pious* ardours that are felt by *really devout* Souls, when a *vigorous* ſenſe of God, and Divine things, doth even ſometimes tranſport them: Far be it from me to deſign any thing ſo *impious*; my aim is only to note, that there are *complexional heats* raiſed

ſed many times by *fancy* and *ſelf-admiration*, that look like *theſe*, in perſons who really have little of God in them; and we ſhould take care that we are not deceived by them. *Thus far* alſo thoſe may go that *ſhall not enter*. I add,

(III.) *A man may endeavour ſomewhat, and ſtrive in ſome degree, and yet his work may miſcarry, and himſelf with it.*

(1.) There is no doubt, but that an evil man may be *convinced* of his *ſin* and *vileneſs*, and that even to *anguiſh* and *torment*. The *Gentiles* ſaith the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 14. *which have not the Law, ſhew the works of the Law written in their Hearts, their thoughts in the mean time accuſing, or excuſing one another.* Conſcience often ſtings and diſquiets the vileſt ſinners; and ſometimes extorts from them *lamentable confeſſions* of their ſins, and *earneſt declamations* againſt them. They may *weep bitterly* at their remembrance, and be under great

great heavineſs and dejection upon their occaſion. They may *ſpeak vehemently* againſt ſin themſelves, and love to have others to handle it ſeverely. All this bad men may do upon the ſcore of *natural fear*, and *ſelf love*, and the *apprehenſion* of a *future judgment*. And now ſuch *convictions* will *naturally* beget ſome *endeavours*: A *convinced underſtanding* will have ſome influence upon the *will* and *affections*. The *mind* in the *unregenerate*, may luſt againſt the *Fleſh*, as *that* doth againſt *it*.

So that (2.) ſuch a meer *animal man* may *promiſe*, and *purpoſe*, and *endeavour* in ſome pretty conſiderable meaſure; but then, he goes not on with *full* Reſolution, but *wavers* and *ſtops*, and *turns about* again; and lets the *law* of the *members*, that of *death* and *ſin*, to prevail over him. His *endeavour* is *remiſs*, and conſequently *ineffectual*; it makes no *conqueſts*, and will not *ſignifie*. He *ſins on*, though with *ſome regret*; and his very

very unwillingneſs to ſin, while he commits it, is ſo far from *leſſening*, that it *aggravates* his *fault*: It argues that he ſins againſt *conſcience* and *conviction*; and that *ſin* is ſtrong and reigns.

'Tis true indeed, St. *Paul*, Rom. 7. makes ſuch a deſcription ſeemingly of *himſelf*, as one might think concluded him under this ſtate; he ſaith verſ. 8. *That ſin wrought in him all manner of concupiſcence*: verſ. 9. *That ſin revived, and he died:* verſ. 14. *That he was carnal*; and again, *ſold under ſin*, verſ. 20. *That ſin dwelt in him, and wrought that which he would not:* verſ. 23. *That the Law of his Members led him into captivity to the Law of Sin:* and verſ. 25. *That he obeyed the law of ſin.*

If this be *ſo*, and St. *Paul*, a *regenerate man*, was in *this* ſtate, it will follow, that *ſeeking* and *feeble endeavour*, that overcometh no difficulty, may yet *procure* an *entrance*, and he that is come hitherto, *viz.* to *endeavour*,

vour, is *ſafe* enough though he do not conquer.

This objection preſſeth not only againſt *this head*, but againſt my whole Diſcourſe, and the Text it ſelf. Therefore to anſwer it, I ſay, That the St. *Paul* here is not to be underſtood of *himſelf*; He deſcribes the *ſtate of* a convinced, but *unregenerate man*, though he ſpeaks in the firſt perſon; a *Figure* that was ordinary with *this* Apoſtle, and *frequent* enough in common ſpeech: Thus we ſay, *I am thus*, and *thus*, and did *ſo*, and *ſo*, when we are deſcribing a ſtate, or actions in which perhaps we, in perſon, are not concerned.

In this ſenſe the beſt Expoſitors underſtand theſe expreſſions, and thoſe excellent Divines of our own, Biſhop *Taylor*, and Dr. *Hammond*, and others have noted to us, That this *deſcription* is directly contrary to all the *Characters* of a *regenerate man*, given elſewhere by *this*, and the other Apoſtles. As he is ſaid to be *dead to*

ſin

ſin, Rom. 6. 11. *Free from ſin*, and the *ſervant of Righteouſneſs*, Rom. 6. 18. That *he walks not after the Fleſh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. 8. 1. *That the law of the Spirit of life in Chriſt Jeſus, hath made him free from the Law of ſin and death*, Rom. 8. 2. *That he overcometh the world*, Joh. 5. 4. *He ſinneth not*, 1 Joh. 3. 6. *He hath crucified the fleſh with its affections and luſts*, Gal. 5. 24. Which *Characters* of a *truly regenerate* perſon, if they be compared with thoſe above-cited out of *Rom.* 7. it will appear, that they are as contrary, as 'tis poſſible to ſpeak, and by this, 'tis evident that they deſcribe the *two contrary ſtates.*

For can the *regenerate* be *full* of all *manner* of *concupiſcence*, and at the ſame time be *crucified to the Fleſh*, and its *affections* and *luſts? one* in whom *ſin revives while he dies*; and yet one that is *dead to ſin? carnal*, and yet *not walking after the fleſh, but after the Spirit? ſold under ſin*, and yet

yet *free from ſin? Having ſin dwelling in him; and a captive to ſin; and obeying the Law of ſin*; and yet *free from the law of ſin and death?* how can theſe things conſiſt? To tell us, *'Tis ſo*, and *'tis not ſo*, and to twiſt ſuch *contradictions* into *Orthodox Paradoxes*, are pretty things to pleaſe *Fools* and *Children*; but *wiſe men* care not for *riddles* that are not ſenſe. For my part I think it clear, that the Apoſtle in that miſtaken Chapter, relates the *feeble*, *impotent condition* of *one* that was *convinced* and *ſtrove a little*, but not to *purpoſe*. And if we find our ſelves compriſed under that *deſcription*, though we may be never ſo ſenſible of the *evil* and *danger* of a *ſinful courſe*, and may *endeavour* ſome ſmall matter, but without *ſucceſs*, we are yet under *that evil*, and *obnoxious* to *that danger*: For he that *ſtrives* in *earneſt*, *conquers at laſt*, and *advanceth ſtill*, though all the *work* be not *done at once*. So that if we *endeavour* and *gain* nothing, our endeavour is *peccant*, and wants *Faith*

or

or *Prayer* for *Divine aids*, or *conſtancy*, or *vigour*; and ſo, *Though we may ſeek, we ſhall not be able to enter.*

But (3) an *imperfect Striver* may *overcome* ſin in *ſome* Inſtances, and yet in *that* do no great matter neither, if he *lies down*, and goes no *further*: There are *ſome* ſins we outgrow by *age*, or are indiſpoſed to them by *bodily infirmity*, or diverted by *occaſions*, and it may be by other ſins; and *ſome* are contrary to *worldly Intereſts*, to our *credit*, or *health*, or *profit*; and when we have in any great degree been hurt by *them* in *theſe*, we fall out with *thoſe* ſins, and *ceaſe* from them, and ſo by *reſolution* and *diſuſe*, we maſter them at laſt fully: which, if we went on, and attempted upon all the reſt, were ſomething: But when we ſtop ſhort in theſe *petty* victories, our *general ſtate* is not *altered*; He that conquers *ſome* evil appetites, is yet a ſlave to *others*; and though he hath *prevailed* over *ſome difficulties*, yet the *main ones* are yet behind.

Thus

Thus the *imperfect Striver* maſters, it may be, his beaſtly appetite to *intemperate* drinking, but is yet under the power of *Love* and *Riches*, and *vain Pleaſure*. He ceaſeth from open *debauchery*, but entertains *ſpiritual wickedneſs* in his heart: He will not *Swear*, but will *backbite* and *rail*: He will not be *Drunk*, but will *damn* a man for not being of *his opinion*: He will not *prophane the Sabbath*, but will *defraud* his Neighbour.

Now theſe *half* conqueſts, when we *reſt* in *them*, are as good as *none* at all. *Then ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have regard to all thy Commandments*, ſaith the Kingly Prophet, *Pſal.* 119. 6. 'Tis *ſhameful* to give off, when our work is but *half* done; *what* we *do*, caſts the greater reproach upon us for what we omit. To *ceaſe to be prophane*, is ſomething as a *paſſage*, but nothing for *an end*. We are not *Saints* as ſoon as we are *civil*. 'Tis not only *groſs ſins* that are to be

be *overcome.* The *wages of ſin is death*, not only of the *great* and *capital*, but of the *ſmalleſt*, if they are indulged. The *Phariſee* applauded himſelf, that he was not like the *Extortioners*, *Adulterers* and *Unjuſt*, nor like the *Publican*, that came to pray with him, *Luk.* 18. 11. and yet he went away never the more *juſtified.* The *unwiſe Virgins* were no *profligate Livers*, and yet they were *ſhut out.*

He that will enter, muſt ſtrive againſt *every* corrupt appetite and inclination. A *leſs* leak will ſink a Ship, as well as a *greater*, if no care be taken of it. A *Conſumption* will *kill*, as well as the *Plague*; yea ſometimes the *leſs* Diſeaſe may in the event prove more deadly, than the *greater*; for ſmall diſtempers may be neglected, till they become *incurable*; when as the *great* ones awaken us to ſpeedy care for a remedy. A *ſmall* hurt in the finger *ſlighted*, may prove a *Gangreen*, when a *great wound* in the

the *Head* by ſeaſonable applications is *cured.*

'Tis unſafe then to content our ſelves with *this*, that our ſins are not *foul* and *great*, *thoſe* we account *little ones*, may prove as *fatal*, yea they are ſometimes more *dangerous:* For we are apt to think them *none at all*, or *Venial infirmities* that may conſiſt with *a ſtate of Grace*, and Divine favour; we *excuſe* and make Apologies for them, and fancy that *Hearing*, and *Prayer*, and *Confeſſion* are atonements enough for *theſe.* Upon which accounts I am apt to believe, that the leſs notorious Vices have ruined as many as the greateſt Abominations. Hell doth not conſiſt only of *Drunkards*, and *Swearers*, and *Sabbath-breakers*: No, the *demure Phariſee*, the *plauſible Hypocrite*, and *formal Profeſſor*, have their place alſo in *that lake* of fire. The *great* impieties do often *ſtartle* and *awaken* conſcience, and beget ſtrong convictions, and ſo ſometimes excite reſolution

lution and vigorous ſtriving; while men hug themſelves in their *leſſer ſins*, and carry them unrepented of to their Graves.

The ſum is, we may *overcome ſome ſins*, and turn from the *groſſer ſorts* of *wickedneſs*, and yet if we endeavour not to ſubdue the *reſt*, we are ſtill in the condition of *unregeneracy* and *death*, and though we *thus ſeek*, we ſhall not *enter*.

(4.) *A man may perform many duties of Religion, and that with reliſh and delight, and yet miſcarry.* As,

(1.) He may be *earneſt* and *ſwift* to *hear*, and follow Sermons conſtantly from one place to another, and be exceedingly pleaſed and affected with the Word, and yet be an *evil Man*, and in a *bad ſtate*. *Herod heard John Baptiſt gladly*, Mark 6. 20. and he that received the ſeed into ſtony places, received it *joyfully*, Mat. 13. 20. *Zeal* for *hearing* doth not always ariſe from a *conſciencious* deſire to learn in order to *practiſe*, but ſometimes

ſometimes it proceeds from an itch after *novelty* and *notions*, or an ambition to be *famed* for *Godlineſs*; or the *importunity* of natural *conſcience*, that will not be ſatisfied except we *do ſomething*; or a deſire to get matter to *feed* our *opinions*, or to furniſh us with *pious* diſcourſe? I ſay, *earneſtneſs* to *hear*, ariſeth very often from ſome of theſe; and when it doth *ſo*, we gain but *little by it:* yea, we are dangerouſly tempted to take this for an *infallible token* of our *Saintſhip*, and ſo to content our ſelves with this *Religion* of the *Ear*, and to diſturb every body with the abundance of our *diſputes* and *talk*, while we neglect our own *Spirits*, and let our *unmortified affections* and *inclinations* reſt in quiet, under the ſhadow of theſe *ſpecious* ſervices.

So that when a great *affection* to *hearing* ſeizeth upon an *evil man*, 'tis odds but it doth him *hurt*; it puffs him up in the *conceit* of his *Godli-*

neſs,

neſs, and makes him *pragmatical*, *troubleſome* and *cenſorious*; He turns his *food* into *poyſon*: *Among bad men, thoſe are certainly the worſt, that have an opinion of their being godly*; and ſuch are thoſe that have *itching ears*, under the power of *vitious habits* and *inclinations*. Thus an *earneſt diligent* hearer, may be one of thoſe who *ſeeks*, and is *ſhut out*. And ſo may

(2.) He that *Faſts* much, and *ſeverely*: The *Jews* were exceedingly given to *faſting*, and they were very ſevere in it. They abſtained from all things pleaſant to them, and put on *ſackcloth*, and *ſowre looks*, and *mourned bitterly*, and *hung down* the head, and *ſate* in *aſhes*; ſo that one might have taken theſe for very *holy*, *penitent*, *mortified people* that had a great *antipathy* againſt their *ſins*, and *abhorrence* of *themſelves* for them: And yet God complains of theſe *ſtrict ſevere Faſters*, Zach. 7. 5. *That they did not Faſt unto him*; but faſted for

for *ſtrife* and *debate*, Iſa. 58. 4. Their *Faſts* were not *ſuch as he had choſen, to looſe the bands of wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burden, and to let the oppreſſed free*, verſ. 6. But they continued, notwithſtanding their *Faſts*, and God's admonitions by his Prophets, to *oppreſs the Widow, and Fatherleſs, and Poor*, Zach. 7. 10.

Thus meer *natural* and evil men ſometimes put on the garb of *Mortification*, and exerciſe *rigors* upon their *Bodies* and external perſons, in exchange for the *indulgences* they allow their beloved *appetites*; and while the ſtrict Diſcipline reacheth no further, though we *keep days*, and *Faſt* often, yet this will not put us beyond the condition of the *Phariſee*, who *faſted twice in the week*, as himſelf boaſted, *Luke* 18. 12. And,

(3.) *An imperfect ſtriver may be very much given to pious and religious diſcourſes:* He may love to be talking of Divine things; eſpecially of

the *love* of *Chriſt* to *ſinners*, which he may frequently ſpeak of with much *earneſtneſs* and *affection*, and have that *dear name* always at his tongues end to *begin* and *cloſe* all his ſayings; and to *fill* up the *void* places, when he wants what to ſay next; and yet *this* may be a *bad* man, who never felt thoſe Divine things he talks of; and never *loved Chriſt* heartily as he ought.

'Twas obſerved before, that there are ſome who have a ſort of *Devoutneſs*, and *Religion* in their particular *Complexion*; and if ſuch are *talkative* (as many times they are) they will eaſily run into *ſuch* diſcourſes, as *agree* with their *temper*, and take pleaſure in them for *that* reaſon; As alſo for *this*, becauſe they are apt to gain us reverence, and the good opinion of thoſe with whom we converſe. And ſuch as are by nature diſpoſed for this faculty, may eaſily get it by *imitation* and remembrance of the *devout forms* they hear and read: ſo that there

there may be nothing *Divine* in *all this*; nothing but what may conſiſt with *unmortified* luſts and affections: And though ſuch talk earneſtly of the *love* of *Chriſt*, and expreſs a mighty love to his *name*, yet this may be without any real conformity unto him in his *Life* and *Laws*. The Jews ſpoke much of *Moſes*, in him they *believed*, and in him they *truſted*, John 5. 45. His *name* was a *ſweet* ſound to their ears, and 'twas very *pleaſant* upon their *Tongues*; and yet they *hated* the Spirit of *Moſes*, and had no love to thoſe Laws of his which condemned their wicked actions. And we may ſee how many of thoſe *love Chriſt*, that ſpeak often and affectionately of him, by obſerving how they *keep his Commandments*, John 14. 15. eſpecially *thoſe* of *Meekneſs*, *Mercy*, and *univerſal Love*.

Thus *imperfect Strivers* may imploy themſelves in the *external offices* of *Religion*: I have inſtanced only

in *Three*, the lik may be ſaid of the reſt. And to this, I add,

(IV.) That they may uot only exerciſe themſelves in the *outward* matters of duty, but *may arrive to ſome things that are accounted greater heights, and are really more ſpiritual, and refined.* To inſtance.

(1.) They may have *ſome love* to *God*, *Goodneſs*, and *good Men.* The Soul naturally loves *Beauty* and *Perfection*; and all mankind apprehend *God*, to be of all *Beings*, the moſt *beautiful* and *perfect*; and therefore muſt needs have an *intellectual love* for him: The reaſon that *that love* takes no hold of the *paſſions* in *wicked* men, is, partly becauſe they are *diverted* from the thoughts of Him, by the *objects* of *Senſe*; but chiefly, becauſe they conſider him as their *enemy*, and therefore can have no *complacency* or *delight* in him, who they think hath nothing but thoughts of *enmity*, and diſpleaſure againſt them. But if once they come to be perſwaded

ded (as many times, by ſuch falſe marks, as I have recited, they *are*) that God is their *Father*, and peculiar *Friend*; that *they* are his *choſen*, and his *darlings*, whom he loved from *Eternity*, and to whom he hath given his *Son* and his *Spirit*, and will give *Himſelf*, in a way of the fulleſt enjoyment; Then the *Love* that before was only an *eſteem* in the *underſtanding*, doth *kindle* in the *affections* by the help of the conceit of *Gods loving them ſo dearly*, and the *paſſion* thus heated, runs out, even into *ſeraphick*, and *rapturous Devotions*; while yet all *this*, is but *meer animal love*, excited chiefly, by the *love* of *our ſelves*, not of the *Divine Perfections*. And it commonly goes no further, then to *earneſt* expreſſions of extraordinary love to God in our *Prayers* and *Diſcourſes*, while it appears not in any *ſingular obedience* to his *Laws*, or *generous* and *univerſal love* to mankind: which are the ways whereby the true *Divine Love*

is expreſt: for, *This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments*, ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John.* 5. 3. And as to the *other*, *thus*, *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*, 1 John 4. 12. And on the contrary, *If a man ſay I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a lyar*, John 4. 20. *Charity* then and *univerſal obedience* are the *true* arguments and expreſſions of our love to God; and *theſe* ſuppoſe a *victory* over corrupt *inclinations* and *ſelf-will*. But the other love which ariſeth from the conceit of our *ſpecial dearneſs* to God upon *inſufficient* grounds; *that* goes no further then to ſome *ſuavities*, and *pleaſant fancies* within our ſelves; and ſome *paſſionate* complements of the *Image* we have ſet up in our imaginations. *This* Love will conſiſt with *Hatred* and *contempt* of all that are not like our ſelves; yea, and it will produce it: thoſe poyſonous fruits, and *vile* affections may be incouraged, and cheriſh'd under it. So

that

that there may be *ſome love to God* in *evil* men: But while ſelf-love is the *only motive*, and the more *prevalent* paſſion, it ſignifieth nothing to their advantage.

And as the *imperfect ſtriver* may have ſome *love* to *God*, ſo he *may* to *piety* and *vertue*: every man loves theſe in *Idea*. The vileſt ſinner takes part in his *affections* with the *vertuous* and *religious*, when he ſeeth them deſcribed in *Hiſtory* or *Romance*; and hath a deteſtation for *thoſe*, who are character'd as *impious* and *immoral*. *Vertue* is a great *Beauty*, and the mind is taken with it, while 'tis conſider'd at a diſtance; and our corrupt *intereſts*, and ſenſual *affections* are not concern'd. 'Tis *Theſe* that recommend *ſin* to our *love*, and *choice*, while the *mind* ſtands on the ſide of vertue: with *that we ſerve the Law of God*, but with the *fleſh the Law of Sin*, Rom 7. 25. So that moſt *wicked* men, that are not degenerated into meer Brutes, have this

mental and *intellectual* love to *goodneſs*: That is, they *approve*, and *like* it in their *minds*, and would *practiſe* it alſo, were it not for the *prevalent* biaſs of *fleſh* and *ſenſe*.

And hence it will follow likewiſe, That the *ſame* may *approve* and *reſpect good men*; They may reverence and love them for their *Charity*, *Humility*, *Juſtice* and *Temperance*, though themſelves are perſons of the *contrary Character*; yea, they may have a great and ardent affection for thoſe that are eminently *pious* and *devout*, though they are very *irreligious* themſelves. The *conſcience* of *vertue*, and of the *excellency* of *Religion*, may produce this in the meer *natural* man, who is under the *dominion* of *vile inclinations* and *affections*; and therefore, neither is *this* a good *mark of godlineſs*. Our *love* to *God* & *goodneſs* will not ſtead us, except it be *prevalent*. And as the *love* deſcribed, may be *natural*, and a *meer animal* man may arrive unto it: So,

(2.) He

(2.) He may to *an extraordinary zeal for the ſame things that are the objects of his love.* *Hot* tempers are *eager*, where they take either kindneſs or diſpleaſure. The natural man that hath an *animal love* to *Religion*, may be violent in ſpeaking, and acting for things appertaining to *it*. If his temper be *devotional* and paſſionate, he becomes a mighty *zealot*, and fills all places with the *fame* of his *godlineſs*: His natural *fire* moves this way, aud makes a mighty *blaze*. *Ahab* was very *zealous*,& 'tis like 'twas not only his own intereſt that made him ſo, 2 *Kings* 10. 16. The *Phariſees* were *zealous* people, and certainly their *zeal* was not always *perſonated*, and put on, but real; though they were Hypocrites, yet they were *ſuch*, as, in many things deceived *themſelves*, as well as *others*. They were *zealous* for their *Traditions*, and they believ'd 'twas their duty to be ſo. St. *Paul* while a *perſecutor*, was *zealous* againſt the *Diſciples*, and he

thought he ought to do many things againſt that name. And our Saviour foretells, that thoſe *zealous murderers* that ſhould kill his *Saints*, ſhould think, *They did God good ſervice in it*, John 16. 2. So that all the zeal of the natural man is not *feigning*, and acting of a part; nor hath it always *evil* objects. The Phariſees were zealous againſt the *wickedneſs* of the *Publicans* and *Sinners*. *Zeal*, and that in *earneſt*, and for Religion may be in *bad* men. But then, this is to be noted, that 'tis commonly about *opinions* or *external rites*, and *uſages*, and ſuch matters as appertain to *firſt* Table Duties, while uſually the ſame men are very *cold*, in reference to the *Duties* of the *Second:* And when *Zeal* is *partial*, and ſpent about the little things that tend not to the overcoming the *difficulties* of our way, or the *perfecting* of *humane nature*, 'tis a meer *animal* fervour, and no *Divine* Fire. And the *natural* man, the

Seeker

Seeker that *ſhall not enter*, may grow up to another height that looks *glorioufly*, and ſeems to ſpeak mighty things. As,

(3.) *He may have great comforts in religious meditations, and that even to rapturous exceſſes.* He may take *theſe*, for *ſweet Communion* with *God*, and the *joys* of the *Holy Ghoſt*, and the *earneſt* of *Glory*, and be lifted up on high by them, and enabled to ſpeak in *wonderful raviſhing ſtrains*; and yet notwithſtanding be an *evil* man, and in the ſtate of ſuch as ſhall be *ſhut out*.

For this we may obſerve, That thoſe whoſe *complexion* inclines them to *devotion*, are commonly much under the power of *melancholy*; and they that are *ſo*, are moſtly very *various* in their tempers; ſometimes *merry*, and *pleaſant* to *exceſs*; and *then* plung'd as deep into the other extream of *ſadneſs* and *dejection*: one while the *ſweet humours* enliven the imagination, and preſent it with all

things

things that are *pleaſant* and *agreeable*; And *then*, the black blood ſucceeds, which begets clouds and darkneſs, and fills the fancy with things *frightful* and *uncomfortable*: And there are very few, but feel ſuch varieties, in a degree, in themſelves. Now while the *ſweet Blood* and *Humours* prevail, the perſon whoſe complexion inclines him to Religion, and who hath arrived to the degrees newly diſcours'd of (though a meer *natural* man) is full of inward *delight*, and *ſatisfaction*; and fancies at this turn, that he is much in the *favour* of *God*, and a ſure *Heir* of the *Kingdom* of Glory; which muſt needs excite in him many *luſcious*, and *pleaſant* thoughts: and *theſe* further warm his *imagination*, which, by *new*, and *taking* ſuggeſtions ſtill raiſeth the *affections more*; and ſo the man is as it were *tranſported* beyond himſelf; and ſpeaks like one *dropt* from the *Clouds*: His tongue flows with *Light*, and *Glories*, and *Communion*, and *Revelations*, and *Incomes*;

comes; and then, believes that the *Holy Ghoſt* is the *Author* of all *this*, and that God is *in him of a truth*, in a ſpecial way of *Manifeſtation* and *Vouchſafement*. But when *melancholick* vapours prevail again; the *Imagination* is *overcaſt*, and the *Fancy* poſſeſt by *diſmal* and *uncomfortable* thoughts; and the man, whoſe head was but juſt before among the *Clouds*, is now groveling in the *Duſt*: He thinks *all* is loſt, and his condition miſerable; He is a *caſt-away*, and *undone*; when in the mean while, as to Divine favour he is juſt where he was before, or rather in a *better* ſtate, ſince 'tis *better* to be humbled *with* reaſon, then to be lifted up *without it*. Such effects as *theſe* do meer *natural paſſions* and imaginations produce, when they are tinctured and heightned by *religious melancholly*. To *deny* ones *ſelf*, and to *overcome ones paſſions*, and to *live* in a courſe of a *ſober Vertue*, is much more *Divine* than *all this*.

'Tis *true* indeed, and I am far from

from denying it, that holy men feel thoſe *joys* and *communications* of the *Divine Spirit* which are *no fancies*; and the Scripture calls them *great peace*, Pſal. 119. 165. and *joy in believing*, Rom. 15. 13. and the *peace of God that paſſeth all underſtanding*, Phil. 4. 7. But then, theſe *Divine Vouchſafements* are not *rapturous*, or *ecſtatical*: They are no *ſudden* flaſhes that are gone in a moment, leaving the Soul in the regions of ſorrow, and deſpair; but *ſober laſting* comforts, that are the *rewards* and *reſults* of vertue; the *rejoycings* of a *good conſcience*, 2 Cor. 1. 12. and the *manifeſtations* of God to thoſe rare ſouls, who have overcome the *evils* of their *natures*, and the *difficulties* of the *way*, or are *vigorouſly preſſing* on towards *the mark*, Phil. 3. 14. But for ſuch as have only the *forms* of godlineſs I have mentioned, while the *evil inclinations* and *habits* are indulged, (whatever they may pretend) all the *ſweets* they *talk* of, are but the

the *imagery* of *dreams*, and the *pleaſant deluſions* of their *fancies*.

THus I have ſhewn how far the *meer animal Religion* may go, in *imperfect ſtriving*: And now I muſt expect to hear,

(1.) That this is very *ſevere*, *uncomfortable* Doctrine; and if one that ſhall eventually be *ſhut out*, may do *all this*, what ſhall become of the *generality* of *Religious* men that never do *ſo much?* And if *all this* be *ſhort*, what will be available? who then ſhall be ſaved?

To which I *Anſwer*, That we are not to make the *meaſures* of *Religion* and *Happineſs* our ſelves; but to take *thoſe* that Chriſt Jeſus hath *made* for us: And he hath told us, That *except our Righteouſneſs exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees, we ſhall in no wiſe enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 5. 20. Now the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* did things in the way of *Religion*, that

were

that were equal to all the particulars I have mentioned; yea they went beyond many of our *glorious* Profeſſors, who yet think themſelves in an *high form* of *Godlineſs*. They *believed* their Religion *firmly*, and *Prayed frequently* and *fervently*, and *Faſted ſeverely*; They were *exact*, and exceeding *ſtrict* in the *obſervation* of their *Sabbaths*, and hated *ſcandalous* and *groſs* ſins; and were very *punctual* in all the duties of *outward Worſhip*; and in many things *ſupererrogated* and went beyond what was *commanded:* Such *zealous people* were *They*; and They *ſeparated* from the *converſations* and *cuſtoms* of *other Jews*, upon the account of their ſuppoſed *greater Holineſs* and *Purity*. *Theſe* were *heights* to which the *Phariſees* arrived; and a good Chriſtian muſt *exceed* all *this:* And he that lives in a *ſober courſe* of *Piety* and *Vertue*; of *ſelf Government*, and humble *ſubmiſſion* to God; of *obedience* to his *Superiours*, and *charity* to his *Neighbours:* He doth *really*

exceed

exceed it, and ſhall *enter*, when the other ſhall be *ſhut out*. So that, when our Saviour ſaith, that the *Phariſaick* Righteouſneſs muſt be *exceeded*, the meaning is not, That a greater *degree* of every thing the *Phariſees* did, is *neceſſary*; but we muſt do *that* which in the *nature* and *kind* of it is *better*, and more acceptable to God, *viz.* That whereas they placed their Religion in *ſtrict Faſtings*, an nice obſervations of *Feſtivals*; in *lowd* and *earneſt Prayers*, and *zeal* to get *Proſelytes*; we ſhould place *ours*, in *ſincere ſubjections* of our *wills* to the *will* of God; in *imitation* of the life of *Chriſt*, and *obedience* of his Laws; in *amending* the faults of our natures and lives: in *ſubduing* our *Paſſions*, and caſting out the *habits* of *evil*: *Theſe* are much beyond the Religion of the *Phanatick Phariſee*; not in *ſhew* and *pomp*; but in *real* worth, and *divine eſteem*. So that, upon the whole, we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged, becauſe They that do *ſo*

much

much are *caſt out*; ſince, though we find not thoſe *heats*, and *ſpecious* things in our ſelves which we obſerve in *them*, yet if we are more *meek* and *modeſt*, and *patient*, and *charitable*, and *humble*, and *juſt*, our caſe is *better*; and we have the *Power* of *Godlineſs*, when theirs is but the *Form*; And *we*, whom They accounted *Aliens* and *Enemies* ſhall *enter*; while *they*, the preſumed *friends* and *domeſticks*, ſhall be *ſhut out*.

But (2.) I expect it ſhould be again objected againſt this ſeverity of Diſcourſe, That our Saviour ſaith, *Mat.* 11. 20. *That his yoke is eaſie, and his burden is light:* which place ſeems to croſs all that hath been ſaid about the Difficulties of Religion. And 'tis true it hath ſuch an *appearance*, but 'tis *no more*; For the words look as *croſs* to the *expreſſions* of the ſame Divine Author, concerning the *ſtraightneſs* of the *Gate*, and *narrowneſs* of the *Way*, as to any thing I have delivered from thoſe *infallible ſayings*.

ſayings. Therefore to remove the *ſemblance* of *contrariety*, which the *objected Text* ſeems to have to thoſe *others*, and to my Diſcourſe, we may obſerve,

That when our Saviour ſaith, that his *yoke* is *eaſie*, the word we read is χρηστὸς, which ſignifieth *very good*, *excellent*, *gracious*; and the meaning I ſuppoſe is, That his Precepts had a *native beauty* and *goodneſs* in them; That they are *congruous* and *ſutable* to our reaſonable Natures, and *apt* inſtruments to make us *happy*; In which ſenſe, *this* expreſſion hath no *antipathy* to the *Text*, or to any thing I have ſaid. And whereas 'tis added, [*My Burden is light*] I think by this, we are to underſtand, That his *Commands* are not of that *burdenſome* nature, that the *Ceremonies* of the *Jewiſh* Laws were: Thoſe were very cumberſome, and had nothing in their nature to make them *pleaſant* and *agreeable*; whereas his Religion had no *expenſive*, *troubleſome* Rites appenda

pendant to it; nor did it require any thing but our obſervation of thoſe *Laws* which eternal *Reaſon* obligeth us to, and which of our ſelves we ſhould chooſe to live under, were we freed from the *intanglements* of the *World*, and *intereſts* of *Fleſh*. So that neither doth this *Objection* ſignifie any thing againſt the ſcope of my Diſcourſe.

AND now I deſcend to the *Improvement* of what I have ſaid; and the things I have to add will be comprehended under theſe two Generals (1.) *Inferences*, and (2.) plain *Advice* in order to practiſe. I begin with the *Inferences* and *Corollaries* that ariſe from the whole Diſcourſe. And,

(1.) We may collect, *What is the ſtate of Nature*; and *What the ſtate of Grace*. We have ſeen that 'tis the *great* buſineſs of *Religion* to *overcome evil Inclinations*, and the prevailing *influence* of *ſenſe* and *paſſion*, and *evil*

cuſtoms

cuſtoms and *example* and worldly *affections*; And therefore the *ſtate* of *Nature* conſiſts in the *power* and *prevalency* of *Theſe*. *This* is that the Scripture calls the *Old man*, Eph. 4.22. The *Image of the earthy*, 1 Cor. 15. *Fleſh*, Gal. 5. 17. *Death*, Rom. 7.24. *Darkneſs*, Joh. 3. 19. *and old leven*, 1 Cor 5. 7. On the contrary, *The ſtate of Grace* is a ſtate of *ſincere ſtriving* againſt them; which if it keeps on, ends in *Victory*. And this is call'd *Converſion*, Acts 3. 19. and *Renovation*, while 'tis in its firſt motions; And the *Divine Nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. the *Image* of the *Heavenly*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. The *Spirit*, Gal. 5. 16. *Light*, Epheſ. 5. 8. and *Life*, 1 Joh. 3. 14. when 'tis arriv'd to more *compleatneſs* and *perfection*.

For our fuller underſtanding this, we may conſider, That Grace is taken (1.) for *Divine favour*; (2.) for *Chriſtian Vertue*. As it ſignifies *Divine favour*, ſo it is uſed,

(1.) For thoſe *helps* and *aids* God affords

affords us, *viz.* the *Goſpel*, Joh. 1. 17. and the *influences* of *his Spirit*, 1 Cor. 12. 9. In this ſenſe we are deliver'd from the *ſtate* of *Nature* by *Baptiſm*, *viz.* We are intituled to *divine helps*, which is a kind of *regeneration*; for we are born in a condition of *impotence*, and *weakneſs*, and *deſtitution* of *ſpiritual aſſiſtances*; This is the *world* of *meer nature*; But then in *Baptiſm*, we are brought into the *world* of *the Spirit*, that is, are put under its *influences*, and are aſſured of its *aids*, and ſo are *morally born again*; Not that this *Regeneration* alone will *ſave* us, without our endeavours; it imports only an *external relation*, and right to *priviledges*, and by *theſe* we may be powerfully *aſſiſted* in our *ſtriving*, if we uſe them.

But then (2.) *Grace*, as it ſignifies *divine favour*, implies his *ſpecial* love and kindneſs, ſuch as he vouchſafes to holy and vertuous men; ſo that we may obſerve that there may be a *diſtinction* between a *ſtate* of *Grace*, and

and a *ſtate* of *ſalvation*. A ſtate of *Grace* in the former ſenſe, is a *condition aſſiſted* by the *influences* of *Gods Spirit*, and all *baptized* perſons are in *that*: But if they *uſe* not thoſe *helps*, they are not in Gods *ſpecial* favour; and ſo not in a *ſtate* of *Salvation*. But when thoſe *aſſiſtances* are duly imployed, and join'd with our *ſincere endeavour*, then the perſon ſo uſing them, is in a *ſtate* of *Salvation* alſo; and in God's ſpecial love and favour. Thus of the *ſtate* of *Grace* in the *firſt* ſenſe, as taken for *divine favour*.

(2.) The word is alſo uſed for *Chriſtian Vertue*, 2 Pet. 3. 18. and *Vertue* is call'd *Grace*, becauſe 'tis wrought in us by the *aſſiſtance* of Gods *Spirit* and the *light* of the *Goſpel*, which are *divine* favours; and to be in a *ſtate* of *grace* in *this* ſenſe, is to be a *virtuous* man, which ſuppoſeth *divine* aids, and intitles to *divine love*.

Theſe things I have taken an occaſion

caſion thus briefly to ſtate; becauſe there is oft-times much confuſion in mens diſcourſes about *Grace* and *Nature*, from which much trouble and many controverſies have ariſen. And by what I have ſaid alſo in theſe brief hints, the doctrine of our Church in the office of *Baptiſm*, may be underſtood clearly, and will appear to be very *ſound* and *true*, notwithſtanding the *petty* exceptions of confident Diſſenters.

(II.) I may infer, *That the great Deſign of Religion and the Goſpel is to perfect humane nature.* The *perfection* of our *natures*, conſiſts, in the *ſubjection* and *ſubordination* of the *affections* and *paſſions* to the *Mind*, as it is enlightned, and directed by the *divine Laws*, and thoſe of *Reaſon*. This is the ſtate of *integrity*, in which we were *firſt* made; and we loſt it by the rebellion of our *ſenſes* and inferiour powers, which have uſurpt the *government* of us ever ſince. Here is

is the *imperfection*, and *corruption* of our *natures*.

Now Religion deſigns to *remove* and *cure theſe*; and to reſtore us to our firſt, and happy ſtate. Its buſineſs is not to reform our looks, and our language; or to model our actions, and geſtures into a devout appearance; not only to reſtrain the practice of open prophaneſs and villany; nor to comfort us with the aſſurance of Gods loving us we know not why: But to *cure* our *ill natures*, to *govern* our *paſſions*, to *moderate* our *deſires*, to throw out *pride* and *envy*, and all *uncharitable* ſurmiſals, with the other *ſpiritual* ſorts of wickedneſs; and thereby to make us *like* unto God, in whom there is no ſhadow of *ſin*, or *imperfection*; and ſo to render us fit objects of his *delight*, and *love*.

So that whatever doth not tend to the making us, ſome way or other *really better*: *better* in our *ſelves*, and better in all *Relations*, as *fathers*, and children, and *husbands* and *wives*, and

ſubjects, and *governours*, and *neighbours*, and *friends*, is not Religion; It may be a *form* of *Godlineſs*, but 'tis nothing to the *life*, and *power*. And where we ſee not *this effect* of Religion, let the profeſſor of it be never ſo *high* and *glorious* in his profeſſion, we may yet conclude that either his *Religion* is not *good*, or that he only *pretends*, and *really* hath it not.

This I take to be a conſideration of great moment and great certainty, *viz.* That Chriſtian Religion aims at the *bettering* and *perfecting* of our natures. For the things it commands relate either to *worſhip* or *virtue*. The inſtances of *external* worſhip are *prayer*, and *praiſe*; both which are high acts of *gratitude* and *juſtice*, and they fit us for divine bleſſings, and keep us under a *ſenſe* of God, and prepare us for *union* with him, which is the *higheſt perfection* of which the creature is capable. Thus the *outward* acts of *worſhip* tend to our happineſs; and the *inward* do infinitely the *ſame*.

Theſe

Theſe are, *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Fear*. *Faith* in God ſupports and relieves us in all afflictions, and diſtreſſes. The *love* of him is a pleaſure and ſolace to us in all loſſes and diſappointments, ſince he is an object moſt filling, and ſatisfying; and *one* that cannot be loſt, except we wilfully thruſt him from us. *Fear* of God hath no *torment*; 'Tis no *ſlaviſh* dread of his *greatneſs* and Power; but a *reverence* of his *perfections*, and a *lothneſs* to offend him; and this *diſpoſeth* us alſo for the *communications* of his grace, and love, *Pſ.* 85.9. And this it doth by *congruity*, and its *own nature*; which is to be ſaid likewiſe of the others. So that they would make thoſe *happy* that practiſe them, whether they had been poſitively enjoyn'd, or not; And though no *expreſs* rewards had been annext unto them.

There are other two acts of worſhip which Chriſtianity requires, which are *inſtituted* and *poſitive*, & reſpect Chriſt our Lord; They are, the *Sacraments*;

Baptiſm, and the *Lords Supper*; both which are *holy Rites* of high ſignification; and *ſeals* of an excellent *Covenant* between God and us, aſſuring us of pardon of ſins, and all divine *favours*, upon the conditions of our *Faith*, and *repentance*; and more firmly obliging us to holy *obedience*, and *dependance*; The only *way* in which we can be happy. Whence we ſee briefly, that all the parts of *worſhip* which Chriſtianity binds upon us, tend to our *perfection* and *Felicity*.

And all the *vertues* that it commands do the ſame; both thoſe that reſpect us in a perſonal capacity, and thoſe others that relate to us as *members* of *Societies*. Thus *humility*, recommended *Mat.* 5. 3. *Meekneſs* bleſt, ver. 5. purity, ver 8. are vertues that accompliſh our *particular* perſons, and make us *happy* in our ſelves. For of *Pride cometh Contention*, Prov. 13. 10. And a great part of our troubles ariſe from ſtomach and ſelf-will; which humility cures. *Meekneſs* alſo takes away the occaſion of

of the numerous miſchiefs we run into through the *rage* and diſorder of our paſſions; and 'tis in it ſelfe a *great beauty* and ornament, ſince it ariſeth from the *due order*, and *goverment* of our *faculties*. *Purity* which comprehends *temperance* of all ſorts, frees us from the tormenting *importunity* of thoſe deſires that drag us out of our ſelves, and expoſe us to ſin, and folly, and temptation, and make us exceeding miſerable; beſides which it is a perfection that renders us *like* unto God, and the bleſt *Spirits* of the higheſt rank. And Chriſtian vertues do not only accompliſh, and make us happy in our *particular* perſons, but they do the ſame in our *publique* capacities, the more *publick* capacity alſo; They diſpoſe us to a *quiet* obedience to our *governours* without *murmuring*, and complaining; and thereby the publique *peace* is ſecured; and all good things elſe in *that*.

But there are *other vertues* that Chriſtianity enjoyns, which have a

more direct tendency to the happineſs of others, as *Juſtice*, Mat 7. 12. *Charity*, 1 Cor. 13. *Loyalty*. Rom. 13. and *all* other *publique* vertues may, I think, be comprehended under *theſe*. Where there is no *Juſtice*, every man preys upon another, and no mans property is ſafe, Where *Charity* is wanting, Jealouſies, hatreds, envying, back-bitings, and cruelties abound, which render the world deplorably unhappy. Where there is not *Loyalty* and *conſcionable ſubmiſſion* to Governours, the *publick* is upon every occaſion of commotion, involv'd in infinite miſeries, and diſaſters. So that all the *precepts* of our *Religion* are in their own nature *proper inſtruments* to make *us happy*; and they had been *methods* of *Felicity* to be choſen by all reaſonable creatures, though they had never been required by ſo great, and ſo ſacred an Authority.

Theſe things I have ſaid, becauſe I could not chooſe but take this occaſion to recommend the *excellency*, and

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reaſonableneſs of our Religion; And I have done it but only in brief hints, becauſe it ariſeth but upon a *Corollary* from my main ſubject, and from *this* I infer further.

(III.) *That Chriſtianity is the height, and perfection of morality.* They both tend to the real bettering, and accompliſhment of humane nature: But the *rules* and *meaſures* of *moral Philoſophy* were weak and imperfect till *Chriſt Jeſus* came; *He confirmed* and *enforced* all thoſe *precepts* of vertue, that were written upon our hearts; and *cleared* them from many *corruptions* that were grown upon them, through ignorance and vice, the *gloſſes* of the *Jews*, and *falſe* conceits of the *Gentiles*; and he inforced them anew by his *Authority* and the knowledge he gave of *divine aids*, and greater *rewards*, and *puniſhments*, than were underſtood before; yea he *enlarged* them in ſome inſtances; ſuch as, *loving enemies* and *forgiving injuries*. Thus *Chriſt Jeſus* taught

morality, *viz.* the *way of living like men*; And the 5. Chapture of *Mathew* is an excellent *Lecture* of *this* kind.

So that to diſparage *morality*, is to *diſgrace Chriſtianity* it ſelf; and to vilifie *one* of the ends of Chriſts coming into the world. For all *Religion* and all *duties* reſpect either *God*, our *neighbour*, or *our ſelves*; & the duties that relate to theſe *two laſt*, are acknowledg'd *moral vertues*. The Apoſtle St. *James* counted *theſe Moralities* of *viſiting* the *Widow* and *Fatherleſs*, to be the *pure Religion* and undefiled. Jam. 1. 17. And the prophet *Micah* intimates, that thoſe *moral* vertues of *Juſtice* and *mercy* were ſome of the main things that God required of us *Micah* 6. 8. Our Saviour ſaith that the whole *Law* is ſumm'd up in *theſe* two, to *love* God with *all* our ſouls, and our *neighbour* as our *ſelves*, Math. 22. 13 which *latter* contains the duties of *morality*. And that which the *grace* of God in the Goſpel *teacheth*, according to St. *Paul* is, to *live ſoberly*, *righteouſly*,

ly, and godly in this preſent world, Tit. 2. 11, There is no *godlineſs* without *morality*. All the *fruits* of the *Spirit* reckon'd up *Gal.* 5. 22. are *moral vertues*. And when we are commanded to *grow in grace*, 2 *Pet*, 3. 18. *vertue* is partly underſtood. For one branch of what is call'd *Grace* in us, is *moral* vertue, produced by *divine* aids, *Chriſtian* principles, and incouragements; though 'tis true the word is extended to thoſe duties that relate immediately to God alſo.

By which we ſee how *ignorantly*, and *dangerouſly* thoſe people talk, that diſparage *morality* as a dull, lame thing of no account, or reckoning. Upon this the *Religion* of the ſecond Table is by too many neglected; and the whole *myſtery* of the *new Godlineſs* is lay'd in *frequent hearing*, and devout *ſeraphick talk*, *luſcious phancies*, *new lights*, *incomes*, *manifeſtations*, *ſealings*, *in-dwellings*, and ſuch like. Thus *Antinomianiſm*, and all kinds of *Phanaticiſm* have made their way by the

diſparagement of *morality*, and men have learnt to believe themſelves the *choſen*, *pretious* people, while their *hearts* have been full of *malice*, and *bitterneſs*, and their hands of *violence*, while they *deſpiſed dominions*, and *ſpake evil of dignities*, *rebel'd* againſt the *Goverment*, deſtroyed *publique* peace, and endeavoured to bring *all* into *miſery* and *confuſions*. 'Tis this diabolical project of dividing *morality* from *Religion* that hath given riſe and occaſion to all *theſe villanies*. And while the Practiſers of ſuch things have aſſumed the name of the *only Godly*, *Godlyneſs* it ſelf hath been brought into *diſgrace* by them; and *Atheiſm* incouraged to ſhew it ſelf, in open *defiance* to *Religion*, Yea, through the *indiſcretions*, and inconſiderateneſs of *ſome preachers*, the *phantaſtry*, and vain babble of *others*, and the general *diſpoſition* of the people to *admire* what makes a great *ſhew*, and pretends to more than ordinary *ſpirituality*; things are, in many places, come to that

that paſs, that thoſe who teach *Chriſtian vertue* & Religion, in *plainneſs* and *ſimplicity* without ſenſleſs *phraſes*, and fantaſtick *affectations*, ſhall be reckon'd for *dry moraliſts*, and ſuch as underſtand nothing of the *life*, and *power* of *Godlineſs*. Yea, thoſe people have been ſo long uſed to *gibberiſh* and *canting*, that they cannot underſtand *plain ſenſe*; and *vertue* is become ſuch a ſtranger to their *ears*, that when they hear it ſpoken of in a pulpit, they count the *preacher* a broacher of *new divinity*; and one that would teach the *way to heaven* by *Philoſophy*: And he eſcapes well, if they do not ſay, That he is an *Atheiſt*; or that he would reconcile us to *Gentiliſm*, and *Heathen Worſhip*. The danger and vanity of which *ignorant* humour, the *contempt* of *morality*, is apparent in the whole ſcope of my Diſcourſe, and therefore I add no more concerning it here; but proceed to another Inference, which is.

(IV.) That

(IV.) *That Grace and the new nature, make their way by degrees on the Soul*; for the *difficulties* will not be *removed* nor the corrupt *nature* ſubdued all at once. *Habits* that grow by *repeated* acts, time, and continuance, will not be *expelled* in a *moment*. No man can become greatly *evil or good*, on a *ſudden*. *The Path of the juſt ſhines more and more to to a perfect day*, Prov. 4. 18, We do not jump from *darkneſs* into *full light*, We are not fully ſanctified and converted in an inſtant. The *day* begins in an *inſenſible* dawn, and the *Kingdom of heaven is like a grain of Muſtard ſeed*, Mat. 13. 31. It doth not *ſtart* up preſently to the *ſtature* of a *tree*. The *Divine* birth begins like the *Natural*, in an imperfect *embryo*.

There are ſome *ſeeds* of *Knowledge* and *Goodneſs* that God hath ſown in our natures; *theſe* are excited by the Divine Grace and Spirit to *convictions*, which proceed to *purpoſes*; *theſe* to *reſolutions*, and thence we paſs to *abſtinence* from all *groſs ſins*, and the

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performance of *outward Duties*; and ſo at laſt by degrees, to *vigorous attempts*, for the *deſtruction* of *evil habits* and *inclinations*. When *Grace* is arrived to *this* eminent growth, 'tis very viſible, as the Plant is when 'tis above the ground: But the *beginnings* of *Converſion* are not ordinarily *perceived*.

So that to catechize men about the *punctual time*, and *circumſtances* of their *Converſion*, is an *idle* device, and a great temptation to *vanity* and *lying*. Who can tell the exact moment when the *night ends*, and the dawn enters? 'Tis true indeed, the *paſſage* from *the exceſſes* of Wickedneſs, which begins in ſome extraordinary horrors and convictions, is ſometimes very notable; but 'tis not ſo in *all*, or *moſt*. The time of St. *Paul's* converſion was eminent, but that change was from *great contrarieties* and *miraculous*, and therefore 'tis not to be drawn into inſtance. Both the *beginnings* and *minute* progreſſions of Grace, are uſually undiſcerned: We cannot

cannot ſee the *Graſs* juſt putting out of the earth, or actually growing; but yet we find that it doth both. And *Grace* is better known in its *fruits*, than in its *riſe*. By their *Fruits ye ſhall know them*, ſaith our Saviour, Mat. 12. 33. and the *ſame* way we may know our ſelves.

(V.) *We ſee that there is an Animal, as well as a Divine Religion*: A Religion that is but the *effect* and *modification* of *complexion*, *natural fear* and *ſelf-love*. How far *theſe* will go, we have ſeen, and how ſhort it will prove in the end. The not noting *this* hath been the ſad occaſion of deceiving many. Some obſerving great *heats* of *zeal* and *devotion* in the *modern Phariſees*, take theſe to be the *Saints* and *good people*; believing all the *glorious* things which they aſſume to themſelves: When *others*, that know them to be *envious* and *malitious*, *unjuſt*, and *covetous*, *proud* and *ungovernable*, and cannot therefore look on them

as ſuch *choice holy* people, are apt to affirm all to be *hypocriſie* and *feigning*. In which ſentences, *both* are miſtaken for want of knowing that there is a *meer Animal Religion*, that will produce very *ſpecious* and *glorious* effects; So that though the *Phariſee* Prays vehemently, and Faſts ſeverely, and talks much of the love of God, and delights greatly in hearing, and pious Diſcourſe, and will ſuffer all things for what he calls his Conſcience; yet he is not to be concluded a Saint from *hence*, becauſe the *meer Animal* Religion may put it ſelf forth in all *theſe expreſſions*.

And though *this Profeſſor* be a *bad* man, *proud* and *covetous*, *malicious* and *cenſorious*, *Sacrilegious* and *Rebellious*, yet we cannot thence be aſſured that he is an *Hypocrite*, in one ſenſe, *viz.* ſuch an one as *feigns all that he pretends*: But we may believe that he is really ſo affected with *Hearing* and *Praying*, and devout *Company*, as he makes ſhew, and yet for all

all *this*, not alter our opinion of his being an *evil man*: ſince the *Animal* Religion will go as far as the things in which he glories.

There is nothing whereby the common people are drawn more eaſily into the wayes of *Sects* and *Separations*, than by the obſervation of the *zeal* and *devotion* of *thoſe* of the *factions*: *Theſe* they take to be *Religion*, and the great matters of *Godlineſs*, and *thoſe* the *religious* and *only godly* people. And ſo firſt they conceive a great opinion of them, and then follow them whitherſoever they lead. For the generality of men are tempted into *Schiſm* and *Parties*, not ſo much by the *arguments* of *diſſenters*, as by the *opinion* of their *Godlineſs*, which opinion is grounded upon things which may ariſe from the *meer Animal Religion*, and very commonly do ſo. This they underſtand not, and by *this ignorance* are betrayed into the ſnare of *Separation*, to the diſturbance of the *Peace* of the *Church*, and

and their *own great hurt* and *inconvenience.* Whereas could they be made to know and conſider, that *complexion* and *natural* paſſions may bring forth *all theſe fruits*, they might be ſecured by this means againſt the *tempting* impoſture; and learn that *Meekneſs* and *Patience*, *Affability* and *Charity*, *Juſtice*, and a *Peaceable*, *humble temper*, are better arguments of *Saintſhip* than all *theſe.* Thus a great *miſchief* might be prevented; and there is *another* that might be remedied by the *ſame* Obſervation: The inconvenience is this,

While the enemies of Factions object *Hypocriſie* to them, affirming that all they *do* and *ſay*, is meer *perſonating* and *pretence*; they confirm and ſettle thoſe people in their way; for many of them *know*, that they are in *earneſt*, and conſequently, that their oppoſers are miſtaken in their judgments concerning them; by which they are better eſtabliſht in their own good opinion, and hardned againſt convi-

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ction; whereas, did they conſider ſuch things as I have ſuggeſted, about the *Animal Religion*, and grant to them that they may be *ſerious*, believe themſelves infinitely, and feel all thoſe Warmths, which they pretend, and yet be *evil men*, and far enough from being *Godly*; Did they ſhew them, that all their *zeal* and *Devotion*, and more and greater than *theirs*, may ariſe from a principle that hath nothing *Divine* and *ſupernatural* in it: They would thereby ſtrike them in the *right vein*, and bring them down from the high perch, whereon, by their *falſe marks*, they had placed themſelves; and thereby diſabuſe them, and prevent the abuſe of others.

(VI.) *We ſee how we may know our ſtate, whether it be that of Grace and Life; or the other ſad one of Unregeneracy and Death.* The *ſtate* of *Grace* is a *motion towards the recovery of the Divine Image, and a perfect victory over our ſelves, and all corrupt inclinations and*

and affections, The ſtate of *Unregeneracy* and *Death*, is the *continuance under the power and prevalency of ſenſe, paſſion, and evil habits.* Now when 'tis queſtion'd by our ſelves in which of *theſe* ſtates we are; it muſt be ſuppoſed that we are arrived at *ſomething* of Religion: For the groſly wicked cannot but know what their condition is. And the way I would propoſe to thoſe others, who are yet *uncertain*, is this, *viz.* To take notice,

Whether they really deſign, and make any progreſs in Goodneſs. Every motion indeed cannot be *felt* or *perceived*; but if we go on, though never ſo inſenſibly, time will ſhew that we are grown. If we *conſider* what are our *particular defects*, and ſtudiouſly apply *proper* inſtruments to remove them: if we find ſucceſs in thoſe indeavours, and that we are *better* this year than we were the former; That our *Paſſions* are *better* governed, and our *inordinate affections* more *reſtrained*, and our *evil habits* and *inclinati-*

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ons leſs powerful with us, 'tis an *infallible ſign*, that we *live* and are in a *ſtate* of *Grace*; that we ſhall at laſt arrive *to a perfect man in Chriſt Jeſus*, Eph. 4. 13. and ſhall *attain if we faint not*, 2 Cor. 4. 1. whereas on the other hand, if we come to ſome *hopeful* pitch, and *ſtand ſtill* there; if *ſin* and *temptation* be as *powerful* with us *now*, as *they* were a year ago, and our *inclinations* and *paſſions* juſt at the ſame paſs; we are in a *bad* ſtate, and *dead*. While the Plant *grows*, it *lives*, and may become a *great tree*, though at preſent it be but *ſmall*: whereas *that* whoſe ſtature is *bigger*, and more *promiſing*, if it *proceeds* not, *decayes* and comes to nothing.

Though we are *imperfect*, if we are *ſtriving* and going *towards* perfection, God overlooks our *Infirmities*, and *pardons* them for Chriſt's ſake. This is our *ſincerity*, and an *effect* of *true Faith*. But if on the other hand, we think our ſelves *well*, and do not always attempt *forwards*, our *ſtate* is

bad.

bad, and our *ſins* will be *imputed*: Be our pretences what they will, our *Faith* is not *ſincere*, and will not ſtead us.

When we get to a certain *pitch* in *Religion*, and make *that* our *ſtate*, 'tis an argument that our *Religion* was *meerly Animal*; and but a *mode* of *complexion*, *ſelf-love*, and *natural fear*. When we overcome *ſome* ſins, and are willing to ſpare and cheriſh *others*, 'tis a ſign that we are not *ſincere* in our attempts upon *any*, and that what we have done, was not performed upon *good* and *divine* motives.

Sincerty is diſcovered by growth, and this is the ſureſt *mark* that I know of *Tryal*. So that we have no reaſon to *preſume*, though, as we think, we have gone a *great way*, if we *go not on*. Nor on the other ſide, have we any to *diſpair*, though our preſent *attainments* are but *ſmall*, if we are *proceeding*. The buds and tendereſt bloſſoms of Divine *Grace*, are acceptable to God; when the *faireſt leaves* of the

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meer Animal Religion are *nothing* in his eſteem.

This is a great advantage we have from the Goſpel, that *imperfection* will be accepted, where there is *ſincerity*; whereas according to the meaſures of exact and rigorous Juſtice, no man could be made happy in the high degree of glory, but *he* that was *perfect*, and whoſe *victories* were abſolute.

(VII.) It may be collected from our Diſcourſe, *Wherein* the *Power of Godlineſs* conſiſts, viz. *In a progreſs towards perfection, and an intire victory over all the evils of our Natures.* The *Forms* of *Godlineſs* are not only in the *ceremonies* of *Worſhip*, and external actions of *feigned* Piety; But all the *fine* things of the *Animal* Religion are of *this kind*; and they are the *worſt* ſort: By the *groſſer Forms* men hardly deceive *others*; by *theſe* they effectually *gull themſelves.* So that many that vehemently *oppoſe Forms*, are the greateſt *Formaliſts. Forms* of

of Worſhip may well agree with the *Power* of *Godlineſs*; whenas *zeal* againſt *Forms*, may be a *Form* it ſelf; whatever makes *ſhew* of *Religion*, and doth not make us *better*, that's a *Form*, at leaſt to *us*. There are *Spiritual Forms*, as well as thoſe of the other ſort, and *theſe* are moſt *deadly*. *Poyſon* is worſt in *Aqua Vitæ*. He that ſpeaks his Prayers *ex tempore* with *vehemence* and *lowdneſs*, if he ſtrive not againſt his *ill nature* and *ſelf-will*, is as much a *Formaliſt*, as *he* that tells his *Prayers* by his *Beads*, and underſtands not one word he ſaith. And thoſe that run away from *Forms* in *Churches*, meet more dangerous *ones* in *Barns* and *private corners*. *Orthodox Opinions*, *devout Phraſes*, *ſet Looks*, *melting Tones*, *affected Sighs*, and *vehement Raptures*, are often meer *Forms* of *Godlineſs*, that proceed from the *Animal* Religion, which it ſelf is a *Form* likewiſe. O that the obſervers of ſo many *motes* in their Brethrens *eyes*, would learn

to

to throw out the *Beames* of their own!

The Form of Godlineſs that pretends it ſelf to be *no more*, is not ſo *hurtful*: But the *Formes*, that call themſelves the *Power*, are *deadly*. 'Tis the *Formality* and *Superſtition* of *Separatiſts* that keeps on the *Separation*: *They* contend for *phancies* and *arbitrary* trifles; *We* for *order* and *obedience*. The people are abuſed by *names*, and being frighted by the *ſhadows* of *Superſtition* and *Formality*, they run into the worſt *Formality*, and ſillieſt *Superſtition* in the World. *The Kingdom of Heaven conſiſts not in meats and drinks*, Rom. 14. 17. neither in *Circumciſion*, nor *Uncircumciſion*, 1 Cor. 7. 19. not in *zeal for* little things, nor in *zeal againſt* them; both the one and the other are equally *formal*.

The *power* of Religion lies in *uſing* Divine *aids heartily* and *conſtantly*, in order to the overcoming the *Difficulties* of our *way*. This *Godlineſs* is not exerciſed ſo much in *reforming others*,

others, as *our ſelves*: The chief deſign is to govern *within*, and not to make Laws for the *World without us*, This is that *Wiſdom* that is from *above*, which is *pure* and *peaceable*. Jam. 3. 17. It makes no *noiſe* and bluſter abroad, but quietly minds its own buſineſs at home.

So that certainly the *beſt* men have not always had the greateſt *fame* for *Godlineſs*; as the *wiſeſt* have very ſeldom been the moſt *popular*. They are the *effects* of the *Animal Religion* that make the *biggeſt ſhew*. The voice of true Religion is *heard in quiet*, it ſounds not in the corners of the ſtreet. The *power* of *Godlineſs* is ſeen in *Juſtice*, *Meekneſs* *Humility*, and *Charity*, things that look not ſo ſplendidly as the *Spiritual Forms*.

And thus of the *Inferences* and *Corollaries* that may be drawn from my Diſcourſe, which though they cannot all be inferred from any of its minute and ſeperated parts, yet they lie in

the deſign and contexture of the whole.

I Come now to the *Advice* for *Practice*. The way of Happineſs is *difficult*, but the *difficulties* may be overcome by *ſtriving*. A *little* will *not do*; *many ſeekers are ſhut out*; what remains then, but that we perſwade our ſelves to *ſtrive*, and that *diligently*; with *conſtant reſolution* and *endeavour*?

We were made for Happineſs, and Happineſs all the World ſeeks: *Who will ſhew us any good?* Pſal. 4. 6. is the voice of all the Creatures. We have *ſought* it long in emptineſs, and *ſhadows*; and that ſearch hath ſtill ended in ſhame and diſappointment. Where *true ſubſtantial Felicity* is we know, and the *Way we know*, Joh. 14. 4. It is not hid from us in *Clouds* and *thick Darkneſs*; or if it were, 'twere worth our pains to ſearch after it. It is not at ſo great a *diſtance*, but it may be ſeen, yea, it may be brought ſo neer as to be felt. Though the

the *way* is *ſtreight*, yet 'tis *certain*; or if it were otherwiſe, who would not venture his pains upon the *poſſibility* of ſuch an *iſſue*? *Many Difficulties* are in it; but our *Encouragements* and *Aſſiſtances* are *infinite*. The *love* of *God*, and the *gift* of his *ſon*; the *blood* of *Chriſt*, and his *interceſſion*; the *aids* of the *Spirit*, and the *directions* of the *Goſpel*; the *Invitations* and *Promiſes*, the rare *Precepts*, and incomparable *Examples* of thoſe holy men that have gone before us: Theſe are mighty *helpes* and great *motives* to aſſiſt us in *ſtriving*, and to quicken us to it.

Let us then ariſe in the ſtrength of *Faith*, and in the encouragement of *thoſe aids*, and attempt with courage upon the *Difficulties* of our way. Let us ingage our *deepeſt Reſolutions*, and moſt *diligent endeavours*. Here is no need to *deliberate*, the things are *neceſſary*, the *benefits unſpeakable*, and the *event* will be *glorious*. It is no Queſtion, I hope, *whether God, or the Creature is to be firſt choſen*; *whe-*

ther Heaven or Hell be better? and therefore there is no cauſe that we ſhould *ſtay* and *conſider*; we cannot be *raſh here*, we cannot *hurt* our ſelves by a too *ſudden ingagement*; we have delayed *too long* already, and every *moment* we ſit ſtill, is *one* loſt to our *Duty*, and our *Happineſs*. Let us reſolve then, and *begin* with *courage*, and *proceed* with *diligence*, 'tis our *End* and *Felicity* for which we are to ſtrive; and every thing is *active* for its End and Perfection.

All *Creatures* are *diligent* in ſerving the Deſigns of Providence; the *Heavens* are in reſtleſs *motion*, and the *Clouds* are ſtill carrying about their *fruitful Waters*; the *ſluggiſh Earth* it ſelf is always putting forth in variety of *Trees*, and *Graſs*, and *Flowers*; the *Rivers* run towards the Sea, the *Brooks* move towards *them*, and the *Sea* within it ſelf. Thus all things even in *inanimate* Nature may mind us of acting towards our end. And if we look a little higher, the

Beaſts

Beaſts of the Field, the *Fowls*, and *Cattel*, and *creeping* things are diligent in *ſtriving* after the *good* and *perfection* of their Natures, and *Solomon* ſends the Sluggard to thoſe little *Inſects*, the *Ant* and *Bee*, to teach him activity and diligence, *Prov. 6.6.* And ſhall the *Beaſts* act more *reaſonably* than the profeſſed Sons of *Reaſon?* May it not ſhame *us*, that we need *Inſtruction* from the Creatures that have no *underſtanding?* With what face can we carry our heads ſo high, and look down with contempt upon inferiour Animals, when *they* live more *wiſely* and more *regularly* than we?

The Sum is, *All things* are inceſſantly *moving towards an End*; and Happineſs is *ours*, which therefore ſhould ingage our moſt careful Thoughts, and moſt active Endeavours

We are ſollicitous and diligent about things of infinitely *leſs* moment, and in effect of *none*, viz. *uncertain*

certain Riches, *ſenſual* Pleaſures, and *worldly* Honours; though the way to *theſe* is ſufficiently *difficult* and *uneaſie*, yet we are not *diſcouraged*; we attempt all thoſe *Difficulties* with an *obſtinate* Courage, though without promiſe of any *equal* aſſiſtance, or aſſurance of ſucceſs. We are often *defeated* in our purſuits, and yet we *go on*. We are *overmaſter'd* by *croſs* events, and yet we *try again*. We *miſs* our *happineſs*, when we have attain'd our *end*, and yet we are as *active* in courting diſappointment another time; either we attain not the *things* we ſeek, or find no *true ſatisfaction* in *them*, or they *die* in our hands *preſently*, and yet we *ſtrive*. And doth not this *activity* about *uncertain*, *unſatisfying Trifles*, ſhamefully reprove our Negligence in reference to our *great End*, *Happineſs* and *Perfection?* In ſtriving for which we have all the *powers* of *Heaven* to *aid* us, and the *Word* of God, and the *Blood* of his Son, and the *experience* of all that ever try'd, to aſſure

aſſure us that we ſhall neither fail of the *things* we *ſeek*, nor of the *pleaſure* that we *expect* from them. And why then do we *lazily* ſit down, and with the Sluggard ſay, *There is a Lion in the way*, while we deſpiſe greater diſcouragements, when vain things are to be ſought? The Merchant doth not give off, becauſe there are Storms, and the numerous Dangers of the Deep to be met with in his way to the *Indies*; nor the Souldier lay by his Arms, becauſe of the hazards and toils of War. And do we act *courageouſly* for *petty purchaſes*; and faint and deſpond when we are to *ſtrive* for *Crowns* and *eternal* Glories?

'Tis true indeed our own *natural* ſtrength is *ſmall*, in proportion to the *Difficulties* we are to encounter; but the *Grace of God is ſufficient for us*, 2 Cor. 12. 9. and we may do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens us, *Phil.* 4. 13. Nature is *weak*, and *imperfect*, but we are not left in the condition of *meer nature*: *For we are not*

under the Law but under Grace, Rom. 6. 14. We are under the *influences* of the *holy Spirit*, which will remove the *mountains*, and plain the way before us, if we take care to engage thoſe aids by *Faith* and *ſincere* endeavour.

For this we may be ſure of, that *God will never be wanting to us*, if we are not *ſo* unto our *ſelves*. So that the caſe as to our *natural inability*, and the *aſſiſtance* of Gods *Spirit*, ſeems to be thus. A man in a Boat is carried from the Harbour he deſigns, by the violence of the Current; he is not able only by plying the Oar, to overcome the reſiſtance of the Tide; but a gentle Gale blows with him, which will not of it ſelf carry him up againſt the Torrent: *Neither* of them will do it *ſingle*: But if he *hoiſt* the *ſail*, and uſe the Oar too, this *united* force prevails; and he gets happily to the Harbour. This methinks reſembles our Condition; we are carried down the Torrent of *evil inclinations* and

and *Affections*, our own *unaided* powers are too *little* for that *great* force: but the *Holy Spirit* is with us, It breaths upon us, and is ready to aſſiſt, if we are *ſo* to uſe it, and by the ſuperaddition and ingagement of thoſe bleſſed Aids, there is no evil in our natures but may be overcome. So that we have no reaſon to be diſcouraged at the apprehenſion of our *impotence*, *out of weakneſs we ſhall be made ſtrong* Heb. 11. 24. If we imploy our *Talent*, though it be but a very *ſmall* one, we ſhall have more, Mat. 25. 29. And if we *accept* of thoſe divine helps, and *uſe* them, what was before, to meer *natural* conſideration, *uneaſie*, will be pleaſant and ſweetly reliſhing.

One of the greateſt *Difficulties* in the way of Religion, is to begin: the *firſt* ſteps are *roughest* to thoſe feet that have been unaccuſtomed to it. The helps and manifold incouragements we ſhall meet with in the *Progreſs*, will render it more *agreeable*

able and *delightſome.* Thoſe very *toils* will be *grateful*; there is ſcarce any great *ſenſe* of *pleaſure*, but where there is ſome *Difficulty* and *Pain.* Even our *Work* it ſelf will be *Wages.* And 'tis not only the *End* of Wiſdom that is *pleaſantneſs*, but the *very way*, Prov. 3. 17. So that though we are call'd upon to *ſtrive*, and to *run*, and to *fight*, (which words import Labour) yet we are not required to Quit our *pleaſures*, but to *change* the *objects* of them; to leave the *delights* of *Swine* for *thoſe* of *Angels*; *ſenſual* for *ſpiritual* Satisfactions.

Thus all things encourage, and invite us to *ſtrive*; God calls upon us, and our own *Intereſts* call; *Chriſt Jeſus* came to ingage us to this Work, and the *Holy Spirit* waits to aſſiſt it. If notwithſtanding all this, we *ſit ſtill*, our Negligence will be *inexcuſable* and *fatal:* or if we *ariſe* and go a *little* forward, and then lay us down to take our *eaſe* and *reſt*, our ſtate (in the judgment of

of one that knew) will be worſe, more *deſperate*, and *excuſeleſs*, 2. Pet. 2. 21.

I *Conclude* all then, in the words of the Bleſſed *Apoſtle*, 1. Cor. 15. *Therefore my beloved Brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your Labour is not in vain in the Lord*: To him be Glory and Honour henceforth, and for ever. *Amen.*

FINIS.

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